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CONTENTS

14 March 1995

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

League Refuses To Send Arab-Islamic Troops to Somalia *[AL-WAFD 5 Mar]* 1
League Organizes Seminar on Jerusalem in Cairo 1
    PA's al-Husayni Previews Conference *[MENA]* 1
    'Abd-al-Majid Opens Seminar *[MENA]* 1
    PLO's Qaddumi on Israeli Policy *[Jericho VOP]* 2
    Al-Husayni on Peace With Israel *[MENA]* 2
    Draft Statute of Jerusalem Fund Delivered *[Rabat TV]* 2

Palestinian Affairs

British Prime Minister Major Arrives in Gaza 2
    Meets With 'Arafat at Presidency *[Jericho VOP]* 2
    Major Pressed for Economic Assistance *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 3
    'Arafat, Major Hold News Conference *[Jericho VOP]* 3
'Arafat Said To Reject Terms for Settlement-Free Gaza *[London AL-HAYAH 13 Mar]* 3
Al-Tarifi on 'Arafat Meetings With Peres, Christopher *[Cairo International]* 4
Fatah Aide: Nothing Achieved at 'Arafat-Peres Meeting *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 13 Mar]* 5
Plainclothes Police Said Secretly Acting in Janin *[HA'ARETZ 13 Mar]* 5
    Sha'th Denies Police Deployment *[Jericho VOP]* 6
    Al-Rujub Denies Reports on Deployment *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 6
Israeli Troops 'Storm Into' Janin Awqaf Department *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Pro-Authority Group Forms in West Bank, Gaza Strip *[Jericho VOP]* 6
DFLP Chief Christopher To Pressure Syria, Egypt *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 7
Hamas Official Says Contacts Held With U.S., France *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 7
Islamist, Rabbi Request Visit to Jailed Hamas Leader *[Jerusalem International]* 7
Two Bombs Defused Along 'Arafat's Route *[AFP]* 8
Netherlands Representation Office Inaugurated *[Jericho VOP]* 8

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

FIS Warns of 'Operation' in UK or European State *[London AL-HAYAH 14 Mar]* 9
Cherif Views Fight Against Fundamentalism *[London INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY 12 Mar]* 9
Fundamentalist on Fight Against Government *[London THE INDEPENDENT 14 Mar]* 10
Women Targeted as Victims in 'Terrorist' Attacks *[Algiers Radio]* 12
Ait-Ahmed Calls For Multiparty Election Dialogue *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 11 Mar]* 12
    Zeraoul on Election Policy *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 13 Mar]* 12

Egypt

Writer Questions Reasons for Christopher Trip *[AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I 7 Mar]* 13
Israeli 'Declaration' on NPT Question Expected *[AFP]* 14
Mubarak Notes Flexibility on NPT Signing Date *[Cairo Radio]* 14
Country Ready To Begin Nuclear Energy Program *[AFP]* 14
Article Analyzes Cairo's Nuclear Treaty Policy *[AL-AHRAM 15 Jan]* 15
Commentary Criticizes Investment Climate *[AL-AKHBAR 26 Jan]* 17

- Article Examines Rights of Press *[AL-AKHBAR 23 Jan]* 17
- Intellectual Affirms African Role *[AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 25 Jan]* 18
- New Personal ID System Introduced *[AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI 25 Jan]* 19

Libya

- GPC Secretary Meets Vietnamese Official *[JANA]* 21

Morocco

- Radio Reports King's Ongoing U.S. Visit *[Rabat Radio]* 21

Sudan

- Opposition Leader: Goal To 'Topple' Regime *[AL-WATAN]* 22
- Peace Achieved in 80% of War-Torn Areas *[Omdurman Radio]* 22
- Al-Bashir Meets Algerian, Ethiopian Presidents *[Omdurman Radio]* 22

Tunisia

- *New Interior Minister Profiled *[Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE 15 Feb]* 23

Western Sahara

- President on Possibility of 'Resuming War' *[Algiers Radio]* 24

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

- Oil Minister, Iranian Envoy Discuss Cooperation *[IRNA]* 25
- Foreign Minister 'Pleased' With Iranian Ties *[KUNA]* 25

Saudi Arabia

- Foreign Minister Receives Russia's Posuvalyuk *[SPA]* 25
- Opposition Reports Arrest of 'Ulema, Professors *[AL-NAHAR 7 Mar]* 25

IRAQ

- UN Security Council Decides To Maintain Sanctions *[AFP]* 26
  - Envoys' Remarks at UN Session Cited *[INA]* 26
  - 'Aziz Addresses Anti-Embargo Rally *[Baghdad Radio]* 26
  - 'Aziz: Iraq Has Complied With UN Demands *[INA]* 27
- Ramadan: Albright Tour Shows 'Hostile U.S. Intentions' *[INA]* 27
- AL-JUMHURIYAH Confident Sanctions To End Soon *[INA]* 28
- UN Envoy: Baghdad Prepared To Return Kuwait Property *[INA]* 28
  - Paper Ridicules Albright Comment *[INA]* 28
- Saddam Said Target of New 'Grand Plan' To Oust Him *[THE JERUSALEM POST 14 Mar]* 29
- 'Skirmishes' Reportedly Continue in North 29
  - PUK Claims Brigade Commander Killed *[London AL-HAYAH 13 Mar]* 29
  - Army Said Bombarding Irbil Villages *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 29
  - Kurdish Forces Attack Regime Post in North *[Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 30
  - PUK Claims Capture of 120 Soldiers *[IRNA]* 30
- Opposition Appeals to Tribes To Stand Against Saddam *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 30
- Opposition Council Meets in Ordinary Session *[Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan]* 30
- Opposition Sources Say Baghdad in 'Turmoil' *[Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 31
- Regime Reportedly Masses Troops, Equipment in South *[Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 31
  - Security Said Heightened in al-Najaf, Karbala' *[Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 31
- Baghdad Hosts Two-Day Oil, Gas Conference 31
  - OPEC Official Expects 'Great Success' *[INA]* 31

  - Oil Minister Gives Opening Address *[INA]* 31
  - Further on Jawad's Remarks *[INA]* 33
  - Arab, European, Asian Experts Attend *[AFP]* 34
  - Foreign Experts on Future Cooperation *[INA]* 35
  - Incentives Offered to Oil Firms *[IRNA]* 35
  - INA Cites CNN Report on Oil Seminar *[INA]* 36
  - Experts Urge 'Quick End' to Blockade *[INA]* 36
  - Conference Concludes *[INA]* 36
  - AL-THAWRAH on Importance of Oil Seminar *[INA]* 36
- Russian Energy Minister Reportedly To Visit *[London AL-HAYAH 11 Mar]* 37
- Communications Minister, Delegation Leave for Paris *[INA]* 37

ISRAEL

- Rabin: Christopher Visit 'Test' of U.S. Ability *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
- Rabin Says No Change in Israeli, Syrian Positions *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
- Peres Says 'Unpopular' Decision on Golan Needed *[HA'ARETZ 13 Mar, etc.]* 38
- Rabin, Peres Comment on Syria Track, Peace *[Jerusalem Radio]* 38
- Rabinovich Sees 'Hope' for Syrian Talks Resumption *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 39
- Beilin: More Than Just Talks Resumption Needed *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 39
- Details of New Procedural Offer Described *[MA'ARIV 13 Mar]* 40
- Peres, Hasan Decide on Water Resources Plan *[Jerusalem Radio]* 41
- Foreign Ministry Top Brass Discuss Ties With U.S. *[Jerusalem Radio]* 41
- Peres on Determination To Pursue Peace Until Elections *[Jerusalem Radio]* 41
- British Prime Minister Major Continues Visit 42
  - Tours Northern Border *[Jerusalem Radio]* 42
  - Peres-Major Meeting Reported *[GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE]* 42
  - Major on 'Land for Peace' Concept *[Jerusalem Radio]* 42
  - Rabin Urges Greater UK Role in Peace *[THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 11 Mar]* 43

JORDAN

- U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Arrives 45
  - Says Talks With al-Asad 'Very Good' *[Amman Radio]* 45
  - King, Christopher Hold Talks *[Amman TV]* 45
  - King, Christopher Hold News Conference *[Amman TV]* 45
  - Renewal of U.S. 'Pledges' Lauded *[AL-DUSTUR 14 Mar]* 48
- AL-RA'Y Views Washington's 'Moral' Debts *[13 Mar]* 48
- Industry Chief on Need for U.S. Financial Support *[JORDAN TIMES 14 Mar]* 49

LEBANON

- Chamber, Officials on 'Day of Solidarity With South' 51
  - President al-Hirawi Speech *[Beirut Radio]* 51
  - Speaker Birri's Address *[Beirut Radio]* 52
  - Chamber of Deputies Statement *[Beirut Radio]* 53
- Nasrallah: Christopher 'Defends Zionist Enemy's Logic' *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 54
- Hizballah Offers To Swap Israeli, SLA POW's for Detainees *[Beirut Radio]* 54

SYRIA

- Warren Christopher, Delegation Visit Damascus 55
  - Christopher's Statement on Talks Cited *[Damascus Radio]* 55
  - Al-Asad Receives Delegation *[Damascus TV]* 55
  - Christopher Returns to Damascus *[Damascus Radio]* 55
  - Al-Asad Receives Delegation Again *[Damascus Radio]* 55
- Aide Urges U.S. To Abandon 'Slow-Process Policy' *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 11 Mar]* 55
- Mashariqah Addresses Rally on Peace Process *[Damascus Radio]* 56

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

- Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Leader Mazari Killed 57
  - Others Also Killed *[Kabul Radio]* 57
  - Reportedly Killed While Captive *[AFP]* 57
  - Mujahidin Sources Confirm Death *[IRNA]* 57
  - Radio Said To Claim Mazari Assassinated *[Islamabad Radio]* 57
  - Iran Blames Taleban Group *[AFP]* 58
- Reportage on Government-Taleban Clashes in Kabul 58
  - Taleban 'Savagely Attacking' Suburbs *[Mashhad International]* 58
  - Government Prepares for Assault *[AFP]* 58
  - Mas'ud-Sayyaf Units Control Southern Area *[IRNA]* 59
- Pakistan Shifts Diplomatic Staff From Kabul *[Islamabad Radio]* 59
- Radio Views Government Readiness To Transfer Power *[Kabul Radio]* 59

India

- Supporters, Opponents of Rao Come to 'Blows' *[AFP]* 60
- Congress-I Spokesman Comments on Elections Outcome *[Delhi Radio]* 61
- Central Bank Welcomes Dollar Decline *[THE ECONOMIC TIMES 9 Mar]* 61
- Deal With Russia on Su-30 Sale in 'Final Phase' *[THE PIONEER 6 Mar]* 61
- Editorial Views Zhirinovskiy's 'Tasteless' Comments *[INDIAN EXPRESS 9 Mar]* 62
- Minister Says Labor, Foreign Trade Links Opposed *[BUSINESS LINE 6 Mar]* 62
- 'Substantial Growth' in Exports Reported *[THE PIONEER 6 Mar]* 63

Iran

- Doctor Announces Ahmad Khomeyni in Coma *[IRNA]* 64
  - Condition 'Improving'; Organs Offered *[Tehran TV]* 64
  - Brain Shows 'Minor Functioning' *[IRNA]* 64
- Velayati Eager To Sign NPT If Israel Does *[Milan PANORAMA 17 Mar]* 64
- Christopher Talks With GCC on Iraq Sanctions Viewed *[Tehran Radio]* 67
- TEHRAN TIMES on Christopher's Middle East Visit *[IRNA]* 67
- Ministry Condemns Killing of Afghan Mazari *[Tehran TV]* 68
- Opposition General Released; 'Ill' from Treatment *[AFP]* 68
- Former General Granted 3-Day Leave From Jail *[IRNA]* 68
- KUNA Previews Ministry Official's Visit to Kuwait 69
- Czech Industry, Trade Minister Meets Officials *[Tehran Radio]* 69
- Australia Seeks Transit Route to Central Asia *[IRNA]* 69
- Majles Ratifies Budget for New Fiscal Year *[IRNA]* 69
- Minimum Wage To Be Raised 20% *[Tehran Radio]* 70

Nepal

- DPRK Diplomats Held Briefly for 'Currency Racket' *[AFP]* 70

Pakistan

- JANG Claims 2 Dead Americans CIA Members *[IRNA]* 70
- Karachi Police Conduct Raids, Arrest Over 300 *[Islamabad Radio]* 70
  - Crackdown Ordered on Illegal Immigrants *[Islamabad Radio]* 71
- Bhutto Wants F-16s, End to Pressler Amendment *[Islamabad Radio]* 71
  - Editorial Condemns U.S Leaders' Stance *[THE MUSLIM 14 Mar]* 71
  - Editorial Views F-16 Situation *[THE NATION 11 Mar]* 72
- Government 'Contemplating' Purchase of 500 Tanks *[THE NATION 7 Mar]* 72
- President Leghari Speaks on Copenhagen Conference *[Islamabad Radio]* 74
- Paper Assails Zhirinovskiy for Annexation Remarks *[JANG 10 Mar]* 74

Inter-Arab Affairs

League Refuses To Send Arab-Islamic Troops to Somalia

NC1203090895 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 5 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by 'Ali Khamis]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League has refused to send Arab-Islamic troops to Somalia to replace the UN forces, which are currently leaving Mogadishu. Ambassador Ahmad Bin-Hali, director of the Arab League's Arab Affairs Desk, has affirmed that no peace-keeping forces will be sent to Somalia after the UN troops had failed to resolve the Somali crisis.

In an exclusive statement to AL-WAFD, Bin-Hali said that a proposal has been made to form a Somali committee, made up of the various factions, to take over the Mogadishu airport and port after the withdrawal of the UN troops.

League Organizes Seminar on Jerusalem in Cairo

PA's al-Husayni Previews Conference

NC1003142995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1345 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Mar (MENA)—A ranking Palestinian delegation headed by Faysal al-Husayni, official responsible for Jerusalem affairs in the Palestinian Authority [PA], arrived in Cairo at noon today to take part in the Jerusalem conference, which starts its sessions the day after tomorrow, Sunday, at the Arab League headquarters.

Mr. Faysal al-Husayni stated upon arrival that the conference will discuss the status of Jerusalem and the attempts at settlement, judization, and the economic siege which Israel is forcing on the city, after asserting that postponing agreement over Jerusalem to the final stage of the negotiations does not mean that this subject cannot be discussed during the ongoing talks.

He said: We are asking that the subject of Jerusalem should top the agendas of the current peace negotiations. He described the Israeli measures on Jerusalem as a violation of the peace process.

Al-Husayni warned of the dangers should the Arab and Islamic nations set up and develop relations with Israel; such relations will be considered a license for Israel to keep Jerusalem since it is currently waging a fierce onslaught through which it is trying to decide the status of the city in its favor.

Faysal al-Husayn concluded his statement by saying that Egypt, through its relations with Israel, can constitute an important factor in deterring the Israelis and putting pressure on them to stop their policy of annexing Jerusalem.

The delegation accompanying Faysal al-Husayni includes Shaykh 'Ikrimah Sabri, the imam of the al-Aqsa Mosque; Amin Majaj, deputy mayor of Jerusalem; engineer Ibrahim al-Daqqaq, official responsible for building the city; and some researchers in Jerusalem affairs.

During the conference, they will present studies and research that will clarify the settlement and judization operations Israel is carrying out to change the character of the city.

'Abd-al-Majid Opens Seminar

NC1203195195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1405 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 12 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid opened an international seminar on Jerusalem under the theme "Jerusalem, City of Peace" at the Arab League Secretariat today.

Participating in the two-day seminar are Shaykh Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al-Haq, shaykh of al-Azhar; Dr. Hamid Algabid, secretary general of the Islamic Conference Organization; Abdelkebir Alaoui M'daghri, Moroccan minister of religious endowments and Islamic affairs and special representative of King Hassan II in his capacity as chairman of the Jerusalem Committee; Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department; Pope Shinudah III, pope of Alexandria and patriarch of the missionary province of St. Mark; Ambassador Badr Hammam, Egyptian assistant foreign minister; and Mr. Kibabir An sisi, head of the UN Committee for the Palestinian people's inalienable rights [name and title as received].

Senior intellectual leaders, political and world affairs experts, and senior international figures in propaganda and media affairs are also taking part in the seminar organized by the Arab League's Palestine Affairs Department.

'Abd-al-Majid said the Jerusalem seminar is being held amid crucial world and regional events and changes that require us to regain coordination and unity in our pan-Arab stands when handling our issues and presenting them to the international community.

He stressed the need to support the Jerusalem cause because Jerusalem is an inseparable part of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. He called for adherence to the international community resolutions on Jerusalem which urge Israel to abrogate all the measures it has taken to change the status of Jerusalem and declares them null and void.

Islamic Conference Organization Secretary General Dr. Hamid Algabid addressed the seminar, praising President Husni Mubarak and the Egyptian Government and people for the warm reception and hospitality they have accorded all participants of the seminar. [passage omitted]

[In a related report, Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic at 1500 GMT on 12 Mar 95 says: "Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has urged the cosponsors of the Middle East peace process and members of the Security Council to implement international legitimacy's resolutions on the Palestinian issue and Jerusalem.

["In a speech delivered on his behalf by Ambassador Badr Hammam, assistant foreign minister, at the opening of the seminar "Jerusalem, City of Peace," he said Israel's policy on Jerusalem and its continuous attempts to Judaize the holy city reveal Israel's future intentions and are serious omens that might wreck security and stability in the region.

["PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi said the struggle over Jerusalem is an international issue, and no state or political entity can act unilaterally in that city.

["Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid asserted the need for a radical and comprehensive solution to the Jerusalem issue, which should not be limited to determining who has the right to sovereignty over the city but also calling for Jerusalem's return to Arab sovereignty in line with Security Council resolutions.

["Islamic Conference Organization Secretary General Dr. Hamid Algabid denounced Israel's continued hostile acts against the Palestinian people and Lebanon and its refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty."]

PLO's Qaddumi on Israeli Policy

JN1203192395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1830 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, has warned against the continued Israeli Judaization and isolation of the city of Jerusalem, the building of settlements, and the procrastination about the implementation of the second phase of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles. He said this Israeli policy constitutes a destructive approach toward the peace process and security and stability in the region.

In a speech at an economic session of a seminar on Jerusalem, held in Cairo today and organized by the General Secretariats of the Arab League and the Islamic Conference, Qaddumi regretted the fact that the two sponsors of the peace process—the United States and Russia—are preoccupied with other issues than the Middle East peace process. He said they have not fulfilled their declared promises to the Palestinian side.

For his part, Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid delivered a speech in which he denounced the continued Israeli scheme to Judaize the holy city by strangling it with belts of settlements and changing its demographic and geographic structure.

Al-Husayni on Peace With Israel

NC1303222595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 13 Mar (MENA)—Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem desk in the Palestinian Authority [PA], has stressed that the Palestinian issue is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that Jerusalem is the heart of this issue. He said that the Palestinians have not concluded a peace agreement with Israel nor have they signed any treaty with it. What happened is a Declaration of Principles. He noted that negotiations will take place inside the occupied Palestinian territories instead of negotiating over them from outside.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, al-Husayni pointed out that Israel is trying to give the world the impression through the Declaration of Principles concluded with the Palestinians that the Palestinian issue has been settled. He noted that Israel claims to the world public that this Declaration of Principles is a peace agreement.

It is worth noting that al-Husayni is currently participating in the International Jerusalem Seminar organized by the Arab League at its headquarters in Cairo.

Al-Husyani appealed to Arab society not to rush to establish relations with Israel at this stage. He stressed the need to link Arab relations with Israel to progress in the negotiations. He noted that the Palestinians are holding conferences and regional and international seminars in a number of Arab, Islamic, and world capitals to put the picture into proper perspective and to show that the peace process has not yet been settled and that the negotiations are continuing, particularly over Jerusalem. He said the negotiations over Jerusalem have been postponed in view of the extreme sensitivity of this issue, stressing that the postponement does not mean that Israel will be given a free hand to make drastic changes in the city or in its geographic and demographic status. He stressed the need for Arab and international political support for the issue of Jerusalem and to link it to the peace process. He emphasized that Jerusalem is the key to war and peace and that it concerns the three religions—Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Draft Statute of Jerusalem Fund Delivered

LD1303222295 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2030 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In Cairo, Awqaf and Islamic affairs Minister Abdelkader Alaoui M'Daghri delivered to Hamid Algabid, secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the draft statute of the fund to save Jerusalem, which the Jerusalem committee had decided to set up in its recent session in Ifrane under the chairmanship of his majesty [King Hassan II]. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

British Prime Minister Major Arrives in Gaza

Meets With 'Arafat at Presidency

JN1403104395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1000 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in the Gaza Strip]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat met with British Prime Minister John Major at the presidency in Gaza today. The two sides are discussing the latest developments of the peace process, the implementation of the second part of the Declaration of Principles, and the obstacles facing the peace process. The two sides will also discuss Palestinian-British relations, and the British role supporting the peace process.

Mr. Major, who is visiting the National Authority areas for the first time, arrived in Gaza at 1000 this morning. President 'Arafat welcomed the British prime minister in the al-Sudaniyah area, north of the city of Gaza, where Major's helicopter landed.

President 'Arafat and his guest reviewed the honor guard, after which the Palestinian and British national anthems were played.

Major is scheduled to make a tour of the Gaza Strip, during which he will visit the Palestinian Police headquarters, and the Nursing School in al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza. He will also visit al-Shati' camp. President 'Arafat will then host a luncheon in honor of his guest.

President 'Arafat and Prime Minister Major will hold a news conference at the end of the meeting and the tour of Gaza in which they will discuss the results of the meeting and the visit.

Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, Justice Minister Furayh Abu- Middayn, and President 'Arafat's Adviser Nabil Abu-Rudaynah were also present to welcome Major and the guest delegation.

Major Pressed for Economic Assistance

TA1403123895 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Report by Hanan Schlein]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At 0900 this morning, British Prime Minister John Major and his entourage arrived in Gaza. After an official reception in 'Arafat's headquarters, a 60-minute meeting was held. It was attended by Palestinian Authority members Nabil Sha'th and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh. Contrary to 'Arafat's conversation with Christopher, this time he mainly addressed the economic issue. PLO Chairman 'Arafat stressed to his guest the grave economic situation and the urgent Palestinian need of economic aid.

Palestinian sources reported that they asked for Britain's help on three main issues: pressuring Israel to remove the closure; financing civilian projects in the Gaza Strip; and helping the continued flow of money from the donor countries. After the meeting, Major toured several civilian project sites under construction and the Rashad al-Shawwa Culture Center. [passage omitted]

'Arafat, Major Hold News Conference

JN1403151795 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in the Gaza Strip]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has stressed the importance of the British role in supporting the Middle East peace process. He also agreed to [British Prime Minister John] Major's proposals to send observers from the international union [as heard] to supervise the Palestinian legislative elections.

In a news conference held with British Prime Minister John Major, President 'Arafat added: We should not forget the fact that Britain has a distinguished relationship with the Palestinians. He pointed out that Palestine was under the British mandate for a long time.

President 'Arafat also asserted that the Palestinian-British relationship will be further consolidated. He said that he briefed Major on the whole situation, particularly the obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, as well as the repercussions of the military siege Israel is imposing [on the occupied territories]. President 'Arafat said he supports all the efforts being made to achieve peace in the world.

For his part, Major emphasized that his country will continue to extend material and technical aid to the [Palestinian] National Authority [NA]. He said that Britain will propose a new program on transferring technology in the fields of administration, health, and infrastructure to the NA areas. He also expressed happiness at President 'Arafat's approval of his proposal on the international union's observers who will supervise the legislative elections.

Major pointed to the difficulties facing the NA. He will also convey to the EU President 'Arafat's request regarding the direct exportation of Palestinian commodities to Europe.

The British Government today presented 50 vehicles to the Palestinian police. It is worth noting that President 'Arafat and the guest delegation toured many areas in the Gaza Strip. The tour included the Police Department in Gaza, the Nursing College at the al-Ahli Hospital, and the al-Shati' camp. The president also hosted a luncheon banquet in honor of the guest.

'Arafat Said To Reject Terms for Settlement-Free Gaza

MM1303161095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 3

[Report by Husayn Hijazi: "Peres Offers 'Arafat State in Gaza in Return For Negotiating Over West Bank For 20 Years!"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza—A well-informed Palestinian source has revealed to AL-HAYAH that at his recent meeting with Palestinian Authority head Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez crossing Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres proposed the idea of Israel agreeing to declaring the Gaza Strip a settlement-free Palestinian state in return for the Palestinians' agreement to negotiate over the West Bank within a period ranging between 20-25 years. But the Palestinian side turned down the offer.

The source added that a severe disagreement erupted between 'Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during their meeting on Friday, namely when Christopher tried to give the impression that the talks between Peres and 'Arafat "opened a big gap in the existing deadlock." 'Arafat tried earnestly to "eliminate this impression," which Peres succeeded in creating, as a maneuver whose aims Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh described as exposed, and which he also said would live for a few days only.

Following the conclusion of the weekly meeting of the Palestinian Authority's council of ministers, the authority's members differed in their views over the results of the two recent meetings with Christopher and Peres. While Ahmad Quray's (Abu-'Ala') described the results as excellent, Dr. Nabil Sha'th played down the importance of these results, describing what Christopher did as an attempt to expand the small gap opened by Peres. But as a realistic and optimistic man, [Sha'th said,] I would like to see something happening on the ground before I can give myself the chance to be optimistic. [passage omitted]

Al-Tarifi on 'Arafat Meetings With Peres, Christopher

NC1403083695 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Jamil al-Tarifi, PA official responsible for coordination with the Israeli side, in Ramallah, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Jundi] We welcome you to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Tarifi] I thank the Voice of the Arabs for this dialogue.

[Al-Jundi] Let us start with the meeting between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Could we say that this meeting achieved some breakthrough in the negotiating process between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides?

[Al-Tarifi] As you know, Christopher's visit to Gaza and his meeting with President Yasir 'Arafat took place one day after President 'Arafat met Peres. As we expected, there was some breakthrough in these negotiations, which met our expectations. Christopher's visit and his meeting with the president in Gaza have great significance. What is required of the United States is to play a major role in its capacity as a sponsor of the peace process. It should be informed of every development and problem, particularly the obstacles the Israeli Government is placing before the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, in particular the transitional stage, under pretexts and excuses that the Israeli Government calls security reasons. So far these have not been security excuses. We hope and expect the United States to assume this role and start applying pressure on the Israeli Government to show commitment to what it signed and to implement the Declaration.

I could say that Christopher's meeting with the president was a positive meeting. The U.S. secretary of state showed a great deal of understanding for many of the issues President 'Arafat presented.

[Al-Jundi] This positive meeting between 'Arafat and Christopher took place after another positive meeting between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. Could we claim that the breakthrough Israel offered in the meeting was offered only to satisfy the United States in light of Warren Christopher's tour?

[Al-Tarifi] Let us be objective. In my estimation the most important positive aspect of the 'Arafat-Peres meeting before Christopher's visit was its setting an agenda or timetable for Israel to adhere to, so that negotiations over the transitional stage and the redeployment of the Israeli troops would end.

We hope that this Israeli commitment will be better than its previous commitments, as noted in the Declaration, because the Israeli Government, as you well know, always claims that dates are not sacrosanct. We hope Israel will not retract its political stance. We hope there will be no political reasons to delay the implementation of the transitional stage agreement, which is the second part of the Declaration.

As you have mentioned, I believe that Peres' meeting with the president also took place to give Christopher and the United States, which is a sponsor of the peace process, as well as the rest of the world, the impression that the peace process between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides is proceeding normally. I believe that this portrays an inaccurate picture. Israel repeatedly violates the Cairo agreement daily. So far Israel has violated the essence of the Declaration by delaying the redeployment of its troops from areas inhabited by the Palestinians. This, of course, is delaying the Palestinian elections, as they were stipulated by the Declaration.

[Al-Jundi] Perhaps one of the most positive aspects of the meeting between President 'Arafat and Peres is that it set 1 July as a date for starting implementation of the second stage of the Declaration of Principles signed between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. Today, Tuesday, a new round of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations begins in Cairo. Could we claim that this round will bring new proposals and a new sense of liberty for the two sides proceeding from the recent Palestinian-Israeli meeting represented in the 'Arafat-Peres talks?

[Al-Tarifi] We hope this will be the start of the Israeli commitment to the Declaration. As the PA [Palestinian

Authority], we were ready for the election process yesterday. We hope the Israeli Government will retain some seriousness toward the peace process. This is what is happening in today's round of talks in Cairo regarding the elections. This will reveal the Israeli Government's seriousness, or absence of it, toward this issue.

[Al-Jundi] Let us return to the starting point of this dialogue, and British Prime Minister John Major's visit, which is the first of its kind by a ranking British official to the Palestinian self-rule areas. What does the Palestinian side expect from the British role in supporting Palestinian action and the Palestinian self-rule experiment?

[Al-Tarifi] Actually, first, we welcome the British prime minister to the Palestinian self-rule areas and Palestinian territory liberated in accordance with the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. We expect the British prime minister to understand the obstacles and the nature of the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track and the obstacles the Israeli Government is placing before this process. At the same time we expect Britain, as a European country, to perform its role, through the commitment of the European countries and the donor countries, to support the PA to execute its development and growth program, something we have been repeatedly promised.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you.

[Al-Tarifi] I thank you and all the brothers at the Voice of the Arabs.

Fatah Aide: Nothing Achieved at 'Arafat-Peres Meeting

MM1403113995 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Fatah Central Committee Member Abu-Mahir Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: 'Arafat-Peres Meeting Achieved Nothing Except Postponing Crisis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunis, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Fatah Central Committee member Muhammad Ghunaym (Abu-Mahir) has stressed that, contrary to what some people believe, the talks Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat held with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres last Thursday at the Erez crossing produced nothing significant on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Abu-Mahir, official in charge of mobilization and organization in Fatah, said that nothing was achieved except postponing the crisis between the two sides.

Abu-Mahir added that what was agreed at the meeting is no more than a promise to achieve something in July.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Abu-Mahir cast doubt on Peres' promises, recalling what Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said, namely that there are no sacred promises—which means, according to Abu-Mahir, that the promises made by Peres during his recent meeting with 'Arafat will produce no results in reality. It is like an empty drum, which makes a noise but offers nothing tangible.

The Fatah Central Committee member pointed out that Peres' promises to 'Arafat are an attempt by the Israeli leadership to preempt U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit and British Prime Minister John Major's visit, and also the EU delegation's visit to the region. They are also designed to give the impression that some achievements have been made on the Palestinian-Israeli track. They are designed to rob the Palestinians of any cards they can discuss with these figures regarding Israel's evasion of the pledges it made in the Oslo accord and the accords that followed it.

Muhammad Ghunaym, who is opposed to the Cairo accord, stressed that what happened between 'Arafat and Peres is a continuation of Israel's evasion. This was clear in 'Arafat's statements to reporters following the meeting, since he cast doubt on Israel's serious intention of complying with the new dates.

Asked whether Peres' recent promises to President 'Arafat have negated the reason for which it has been decided to hold meetings of the Fatah Central Committee and the PLO Executive Committee in Tunis between 15 and 19 March, Abu-Mahir said that these meetings are important and should be held weekly or biweekly in order to guide action in the right direction.

He stressed that, as a result of the failure to hold meetings of these frameworks, the Palestinian scene has begun to suffer a state of confusion. And the Palestinian Authority has fallen victim to the autocratic attitude, which has had an extremely negative impact on the situation in the self-rule areas and the course of the negotiations with Israel.

Plainclothes Police Said Secretly Acting in Janin

TA1303130795 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Mar 95 pp A1, A2

[Report by Eytan Rabin and Ori Nir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] document indicates that hundreds of plainclothes Palestinian police have recently started to secretly operate in Janin. This activity is in preparation for the transfer of the city to the Palestinian Authority [PA], an issue that was recently raised in discussions between Israel and the PA, but was not concluded.

According to the authors of the document, the policemen usually deal with settling civilian disputes and investigate crimes. Three local residents suspected of cooperation with Israel have been taken to Jericho after being questioned by the policemen.

The Palestinian policemen in Janin arrest various suspects, but avoid confronting the IDF troops stationed in the city. In addition to the police, persons belonging to Jibril al-Rujub also operate in Janin.

Senior military sources last night confirmed the remarks made in the document, saying that the Palestinian activity takes place with the IDF's knowledge. According to the sources, some of the policemen are armed. They said that the number of policemen operating in Janin is small. Israeli security sources said last night that Palestinian policemen operate also in Ramallah and Nabulus.

Ori Nir reports: Janin officials yesterday categorically denied the assertions of the military document regarding the Palestinian policemen's activities in the city, which are allegedly part of the preparations for the transfer of the city to the PA. [passage omitted]

Jibril al-Rujub's Preventive Security Service personnel have been operating in Janin—as well as in other West Bank cities—for the past several month, openly, in a semiofficial manner, and with the knowledge of the Israeli authorities. If, indeed, Palestinian policemen were sent to Janin from Gaza or Jericho, with the knowledge or even approval of the Israeli authorities, then it is a startling departure from and a complete contradiction of Israel's stated policy so far. [passage omitted]

The PA yesterday denied that it is holding secret negotiations with Israel regarding the IDF redeployment in the West Bank. Yasir 'Arafat's spokesman Nabil Abu-Rudaynah said yesterday that the PA is conducting its negotiations with Israel publicly. "We do not need secret negotiations." he said. [passage omitted]

Sha'th Denies Police Deployment

JN1303160495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, has denied reports on Palestinian police deployments in the Janin area.

In statements to journalists at the festival marking the inauguration of the Netherlands representation office in Jericho today, Sha'th added: There has been no final agreement with Israel on the Janin area.

The minister of planning and international cooperation stressed that the Palestinian Authority and police are fully prepared to assume their responsibility once the Israeli occupation troops are redeployed outside the Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank.

Dr. Sha'th stressed that the Palestinian side is fully committed to the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles agreement.

Al-Rujub Denies Reports on Deployment

JN1303150395 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Report by Basim Abu-Sumayyah in the Palestinian "occupied territories"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service, has denied the existence of any police or security activity outside the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. Al-Rujub said what is taking place in certain regions of the West Bank is being carried out by Fatah and the social reform committees. He said this existed before the signing of the Declaration of Principles agreement with Israel.

In addition, Palestinian sources in the city of Janin denied reports about the deployment of Palestinian policemen in the city. The sources said this has to do with proposals discussed between the Palestinian and Israeli sides three weeks ago, noting that the two sides did not reach an agreement on these proposals.

The Israeli newspaper HA'ARETZ today published an Israeli Army document saying that dozens of Palestinian plainclothesmen have recently started to operate secretly in the city of Janin, north of the West Bank, in preparation for the transfer of authorities to the Palestinian National Authority. According to Israeli military sources, some Palestinian policemen carry arms, adding that the Palestinian plainclothes police are also active in Ramallah and Nabulus with the knowledge of the Israeli authorities.

Israeli Troops 'Storm Into' Janin Awqaf Department

JN1303164095 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In an unprecedented, provocative step against Muslim religious feelings, Israeli occupation troops this morning stormed into the Awqaf Department in Janin and confiscated several files concerning lands, religious endowments, and mosques. They also confiscated the dossiers of zakat [alms tax] funds and other important documents.

These provocative measures have produced a feeling of bitterness among Awqaf Ministry officials and all citizens in Janin.

Pro-Authority Group Forms in West Bank, Gaza Strip

JN1203154495 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been announced that a new political grouping was formed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The grouping is called the Palestinian

Unionist Grouping [al-Tajammu' al-Wahdawi al-Filistini]. Dawud Abu-Ghazalah, a spokesman for the grouping, told our correspondent in Jerusalem that the new political grouping is committed to the Palestinian National Authority's political course. Abu-Ghazalah said that the text of the grouping's bylaws will be distributed during the next few days.

DFLP Chief: Christopher To Pressure Syria, Egypt

JN1003134295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], said today U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour aims at exerting pressure on Syria to accept partial solutions on the basis of Majdal Shams first in exchange for normalization steps with Israel. This came in a speech at a popular rally held in Damascus on the 26th anniversary of the launching of the DFLP. Hawatimah accused the U.S. Administration of intensifying pressure on Egypt to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to maintain international sanctions imposed on Iraq and Libya.

Hawatimah revealed that secret talks are being held in Sweden between Nabil Sha'th and 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Yahya on the Palestinian National Authority side and Yosi Beilin on the Israeli Government to break the stalemate in the talks between the two sides. Hawatimah believes these secret talks are imposed by Israel to delay the relocation of the Israeli Army from the West Bank until July, as well as to gain more time to Judaize Jerusalem and accelerate settlement activities.

Hamas Official Says Contacts Held With U.S., France

JN1003190295 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1700 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Imad al-Faluji, an official of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, today revealed that he held a meeting in Gaza with (Jean Christophe Butel), French consul-general in Jerusalem. Al-Faluji said: We discussed the ongoing peace process between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, as well as Hamas' stand in this respect.

'Imad al-Faluji also noted that contacts have been held abroad between Hamas and Western representatives, particularly American representatives. He said that a meeting was held recently between Musa Abu-Marzuq, member of the Hamas Political Bureau, and U.S. officials. Al-Faluji did not reveal any further details.

Paris, however, today denied holding any contacts with Hamas. The spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry said: France has not held any contacts with Hamas. The spokesman said that an official from the French Consulate General in Jerusalem met in Gaza with an official from the Palestinian newspaper AL-WATAN and reminded him of Paris' firm stand, which supports the peace process and condemns the use of violence.

Islamist, Rabbi Request Visit to Jailed Hamas Leader

JN1303184195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel, by radio correspondent Muhammad Sharif "a short while ago"; place not given; from the "With the Events" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sharif] Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish, leader of the Islamic Movement in Israel: Did you and Rabbi (Fruman) visit Shaykh Ahmad Yasin [leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas] in jail today?

[Darwish] Today, we submitted a request to visit him. We hope the response will be positive.

[Sharif] What is the objective of this visit?

[Darwish] In fact, it is a continuation of the campaign we are launching, so to say, for Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's case in particular. I am honored to lead the campaign in this area to make try to make an impression on local and world public opinion to help gain the release of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. This is the first objective.

The second objective is that Rabbi (Menahem Fruman) wants to hear from Shaykh Ahmad Yasin himself whether Islam permits the conclusion of a truce between the Jewish state and the Palestinians, particularly the Palestinian Islamists, especially since the local and world media have carried a viewpoint attributed to Shaykh Yasin that permits the conclusion of a truce for 10 years, according to most Islamic scholars.

Other Islamic scholars have said that a truce can last more than 10 years between two enemies: The Muslims and their enemy. This viewpoint, published in the magazine FILASTIN AL-MUSLIMAH, has prompted Rabbi (Fruman) to submit a request to visit Shaykh Yasin, so he can hear this viewpoint from the shaykh himself. My personal viewpoint is that Islamic law does not object to the conclusion of a truce between Muslims and non-Muslims at any time and under all circumstances.

[Sharif] In your opinion, will Shaykh Yasin respond or give such a fatwa [religious ruling] or viewpoint?

[Darwish] Brother, first, in my opinion, even right-wing Israeli circles have not objected to releasing Shaykh Yasin. As everyone knows, these circles are led by David Levy, a Knesset member and a former foreign minister, who supported the idea of releasing the shaykh. Moreover, right-wing Knesset members have contacted me and asked that they remain anonymous. They also encouraged releasing Shaykh Yasin after we briefed them on the fact that releasing the shaykh will be one of the alleviating and stabilizing factors in the region. Second, we asked them: what will be the Israeli Government's position before the local and world public if the shaykh dies in prison? Will the peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis or between the Israelis and the Arabs in general hold if one of the Palestinian people's symbols dies behind bars? This is a good question.

Second [as heard], will Shaykh Yasin respond to the idea of a truce or not? In fact, Shaykh Yasin proposed this idea and has expressed his own convictions. In my recent meeting with the shaykh, he said: I am for peace that grants my people their full rights and ends occupation.

Two Bombs Defused Along 'Arafat's Route

NC1203165395 Paris AFP in English 1629 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, March 12 (AFP)—Palestinian police discovered two bombs along a road due to be taken by PLO chief Yasir 'Arafat among seven devices discovered Sunday [12 March] in Gaza.

One of devices on 'Arafat's route—40 kilos (88 lbs) of explosives—left a crater 20 metres (yards) across when Israeli army experts blew it up in a controlled explosion, witness said.

The first four bombs were found along the border with Egypt, and the Israeli army also blew them up, military officials said.

Another was planted at the settlement of Morag, and also destroyed.

Then Palestinians found two remote-controlled bombs on a highway near Kfar Darom settlement.

They alerted the Israeli army which sealed off the area, evacuating people living nearby and a secondary school.

The highway was closed and 'Arafat's convoy returning from Egypt was diverted to a smaller road through the Dayr al-Balah town.

The highway connects Rafah, on the Egyptian border, to Gaza City and is the route 'Arafat generally takes.

Palestinian police and witnesses said the explosives were discovered when a young boy saw wires protruding from a movable plastic barrier near the settlement.

Netherlands Representation Office Inaugurated

JN1303155995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the presence of Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, and Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government, the Netherlands representation office to the National Authority was inaugurated today in Jericho.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, conveyed President Yasir 'Arafat's gratitude for the government of the Netherlands support for the Palestinian cause. 'Urayqat stressed that the Palestinian National Authority seeks to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy.

For his part, (William Belars), director of the Netherlands representation office, said he is happy on this occasion, which marks the start of official Dutch presence in the National Authority's area. He stressed that the government of the Netherlands supports the peace efforts and economic and social development programs for the Palestinian people.

Algeria

FIS Warns of 'Operation' in UK or European State

MM1403122595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Mar 95 pp 1,.4

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Salvation Front Fears an Operation Against it in London"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London—Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] sources expressed their fears yesterday that "some kind of operation" might take place in Britain or another European state "with the aim of using it as justification for a campaign against FIS supporters." The sources pointed out that the Algerian intelligence service has recently "reinforced its presence" in the European capitals—"which indicates that something is being prepared with a view to accusing us of it." The sources said that the British police have been notified of this information.

Algeria and some European states believe that supporters of the FIS and the extremist Armed Islamic Group [GIA] are using European territory to collect money and purchase weapons for the armed groups fighting the Algerian regime since 1992, namely since the elections were canceled. FIS circles stress that their activities in Europe are "legal" and conform to the laws of the countries in which they live. But certainly some groups are operating outside the framework of these laws and are active on more than one level with a view to supporting the armed groups in Algeria.

It is believed that Algerian intelligence is infiltrating many of these groups. Some people say that the operation carried out two weeks ago against the "cell supporting" the GIA in Belgium was conducted in cooperation with Algerian security services. In this operation Brussels arrested nine Algerians, among them an elected FIS "deputy" (member of the parliamentary mission) named Ahmed El Zaoui.

The Algerian Embassy in London declined to comment on the FIS sources' accusations. However, an Algerian official, who asked to remain anonymous, has revealed that the embassy has received a threat to the effect that its staff will be eliminated if it does not suspend the publication of a bulletin distributed in London.

The official pointed out that the threat received by the embassy is in English and bears the signature of a person named "Abu Omar" on behalf of "Algerian communities in Europe." The official said that the message threatened to "eliminate" the embassy's staff if the English bulletin ALGERIA NEWS continues to be published. This bulletin is distributed to embassies, students, and media officials in Britain, and it covers various issues.

Cherif Views Fight Against Fundamentalism

MS1403101995 London INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY in English 12 Mar 95 p 16

[Report on interview with Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif by Robert Fisk in his Algiers office; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It's not often that you have the chance to ask the Algerian Minister of the Interior if he is an "eradicator", that rare breed of muscle-men of whom all Algerians talk, who believe that only a military solution will bring peace to the Arab world's most tragic war. So when Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, walked into his second floor office in Algiers' Palais du Gouvernoment—well-cut blue suit, red tie, goatee beard and a massive Havana—I asked the fatal question. What is an "eradicator" "? And was he one himself?

Mr Meziane Cherif drew heavily on his cigar for a long time—a very long time indeed—before replying. And then he said: "I don't know what an eradicator is. A farmer can be an eradicator when he pulls weeds from the fields, sometimes a man has to purify water and cleanse things of insects and bugs. There is an extreme situation of violence and terrorism in Algeria. Do you call a law-enforcement officer who does his job an eradicator? People usually call those who will commit treason and escape 'conciliators'. If I have to choose between the two, I will do everything to ensure that Algeria remains a modern society."

In other words, Mr Meziane Cherif is an "eradicator", prepared to fight on to the end against the "terrorists", "criminals", the "virus" that threatens his country. He is one of the hard men—sentenced to death by the French in the war of independence, a former governor of Jelfa, Bidjaya, Gelba, Ein-Difla and Algiers—the kind of guy whose jails would not have air-conditioning. Ask if it's really fair to condemn the Algerians who called for peace in Rome and condemned violence in a joint statement with the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), and the minister's aide, a bruiser with close-cropped hair and a handshake as fierce as a lobster's claw, mutters: "It condemns violence in a philosophical way." So much for conciliation.

Philosophy, in fact, seems close to the minister's heart. Take the people who are demanding weapons to defend themselves from those who would supposedly take Algeria back to a medieval Caliphate. There are armed men now in the villages of Algeria, without sanction, without official support (so we are led to believe), who are banding together to fight "fundamentalism". Does the minister approve of such militias, setting up roadblocks, showing their weapons on the streets? A cloud of Havana smoke drifted across the powder-blue pseudo-baroque sofas.

"The government did not authorise them. But we are preparing a law which may enable groups of citizens in isolated areas to protect themselves. The groups who have organised themselves up to now are groups of mujahidin (independence war veterans) who believe they are fighting the enemy of yesteryear—the French and the (pro-French Algerian) Harkis. Many people are asking for weapons. There is a village near Djijel where all 250 inhabitants came en masse to the gendarmerie demanding weapons.

We are examining their requests very carefully to avoid it leading to anarchy—but we cannot put a gendarme next to every Algerian. We will accept their request but we are going to control it carefully."

Stand by then for village militias, or town militias or—no, the words never crossed the minister's lips—city militias. Was it true that there was a special "anti-terrorist brigade" operating out of the Chateau Neuf commissariat of police, loyal only to General Mohamed Lamari, chief of staff of the army and the most famous of all "eradicators"? There was no such group, Mr Meziane Cherif insisted. "We don't have an anti-terrorist brigade but we have organised groups (sic) within the army, the police and the gendarmerie." Chateau Neuf is reputedly the nastiest interrogation centre in Algiers, but when you watch Mr Meziane Cherif's face and that huge cigar and the minister's watchful aide, Basil Fawlty comes to mind: whatever you do, don't mention torture.

The Algerian Minister of the Interior is an extraordinary man, sometimes remarkably frank, yet indulging in the occasional whopper without a hint of embarrassment. Only 2,000 members of the security forces had been killed in more than three years, he said. Then, within 30 seconds, this became "between 2,000 and 3,000". Most people suspect the real figure is well over 10,000. But ask about "Islamist" infiltration into the security forces and he replies: "There were some soldiers who deserted a year ago and helped the fundamentalists in military matters. About 50 military cadets did this in the past two years. But we're not infiltrated that's categorical... there have been several policemen caught red-handed betraying colleagues or fighting in gun battles (with the police) but there can't be more than four or five cases."

What about the Algerian cop who spilled the beans to the French newspaper LE MONDE last week, claiming that some policemen had executed "untrustworthy" colleagues? "There are former policemen in France who tell all kinds of stories," the minister said. "I haven't looked into this but I can tell you truth is often distorted." As for figures, "perhaps 20 former policemen" worked for the FIS. There were times when, listening to Mr Meziane Cherif, you had to draw in your breath. When he boasted that "I can tell you there will be no attack against an embassy here", you could almost see the FIS logistics men pulling out maps for the destruction of every diplomatic compound in Algiers.

The British were condemned for "allowing the existence of a 'Muslim parliament' which spreads the overall idea of fundamentalism". Nasser, Meziane Cherif said optimistically, had managed to "eradicate"—that word again—fundamentalism. But the message was clear. "No one in the world can pressure Algeria. In the worst months of the (independence) war, we never accepted advice from others. We sometimes reacted badly to friends who tried to interfere. But Algeria knows what it is doing. We are fighting fundamentalism that will otherwise invade other (sic) European countries. We are doing the job for other Arab and European countries." Not to put too fine a point on it, a little eradication, it seems, will do the job.

Fundamentalist on Fight Against Government

MS1403104695 London THE INDEPENDENT in English 14 Mar 95 p 17

[Report by Robert Fisk: "Where Men in Black Come Out To Prey"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] "I'll turn this on so they can't hear us," the young man said, and placed a small transistor radio on the window-sill, its brassy music drowning out any listening apparatus the Algiers cops might have rigged up near the house. The story we listened to was one of secrecy and fear, of summary execution, of clandestine government death squads, of "Islamist" leaders shot dead "while trying to escape", of mass graves and numbered corpses in plastic bags.

The slaughter at Sekardji prison in Algiers last month, in which the government acknowledges the death of 96 "Islamist" prisoners, killed off 223 "cadres" of the Islamic Salvation Front, according to the men in the room, all "murdered" in revenge for the suicide bombing of the Algiers police commissariat.

There is not a hint of doubt among these men, not a moment of hesitation. For them the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) is not made up of "terrorists" or "criminals" as the Algerian government calls them, but the "armed opposition".

Ask about the claims—backed up by all too detailed evidence—that the GIA rapes women, and one of the men replies: "This is just an attempt to discredit the resistance." Express incredulity at this answer and the response is softened, the kind of grubby reply that governments give when called to account. "There are excesses by the GIA, of course," another man says. Which is one way of saying that the GIA rapes women.

But it is government excess of which they wish to speak, brutal, consistent, carried out with the help—so they and others claim in Algiers—of a special "Anti-Terrorist Brigade" based at the Chateau Neuf police station, the old torture centre where women are still taken for the most savage of interrogations and, according to these same men, systematic rape and execution. Lawyers acting on behalf of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) men say that in many cases the Algerian police no longer bother to torture prisoners for confessions before dragging them into court, they merely execute them. "The government is now in the process of trying to eliminate all the FIS cadres," an Islamist sympathiser tells me. "Everyone suspected of having sympathy with the Islamists is hunted down."

An Algiers lawyer—"please do not use my name," he says, and you can imagine the reason tries to explain. "In the last month and a half, there have been no more judicial hearings in Algiers, there have been no trials but there have been thousands of arrests. The government set up special courts in Oran, Algiers and Constantine in September 1992, but they didn't work because the lawyers would not co-operate. The government abolished special courts this year—and this was said to be a good, liberal thing. But there have been no court hearings since then, just the arrests."

He mentions the cases of two "Islamist" physics teachers from Blida, Dr Fouad Bouchlaghem and Dr Ahmed Boulaaresse. "Both were arrested by the Algiers police," the lawyer says. "One had a PhD from Toulouse University, the other was trained at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Then later, after their detention, the police just said they were both 'shot while trying to escape'. What are we supposed to conclude from this?"

More frightening still are the cases of Dr Nourredine Ameur, head of orthopaedics at Harrache hospital in Algiers, and Dr Cherif Belahrache, head of rheumatology at Constantine hospital. Taken from their hospitals by armed police last year—Dr Ameur was picked up in December they have disappeared.

Then there is Azedine Alwane, accountant in the nationalised Algerian water company, Sedac. "A cop had been killed last year and my client was accused of the crime," his lawyer says. "Alwane's father was a 'moudjahid', a hero of the independence war against France. But in prison, they tortured Alwane very badly and then they castrated him.

"His father intervened to try and get him out of prison and we got an acquittal in court—the other policemen in the courtroom were weeping when they heard the evidence of what had been done to him. At one point, he had been taken for hospital treatment in the trunk of a car. His father even went to the minister of interior, Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, and asked for his help, but the minister told him that he couldn't do anything because the men responsible were 'under the orders of Lamari'."

General Mohamed Lamari is the Algerian army chief of staff, leader of the country's "eradicateurs", the men who believe that only armed force will resolve Algeria's crisis. The interior minister, Meziane Cherif, is himself an eradicateur, last week, he denied the existence of the anti-terrorist brigade of which the Islamists are so terrified but agreed that "we have organised groups (sic) within the army, the police and the gendarmerie" to counter "terrorism". According to lawyers for "Islamist" prisoners, the "Anti-Terrorist Brigade" now has operatives working out of police stations in the Algiers suburbs of Hussein Dey, Kouba Benakhnoun and Fontaine Fraiche as well as Chateau Neuf, comprising 6,000 of the 60,000 cops in the capital.

In any event, Alwane broken, in terror of his life after his acquittal, hid in fear from the police as they raided his home, and has now fled along with his war-hero father to a house 300 miles from Algiers. But it is the bloodbath at Sekardji that most pre- occupies the Islamist opponents of the government, some of whom have made their own inquiries into the killings.

"A doctor at the prison says that 230 were killed," one of them says. "We have heard that members of the security forces were shooting from the rooftops. It was a liquidation. Among our cadres killed was Ikhlef Sherati, an imam and a professor at a small Koranic school at Cite La Montagne there was a general strike when local people heard of his death. Nourredin Harek, a professor of education, was also killed. A few days before this Operation Carnage (the FIS's nickname for the suppression of the SekardJi prison mutiny), the lawyer of the Islamist leader Abdulkader Hachani visited him in prison and Hachani told him that 'the pouvoir (authorities) are planning something'."

Lawyers say the bodies of the dead from Sekardji were taken to the al-Alia cemetery in Algiers for burial by the authorities. "The victims were put in plastic bags and buried in ditches in the cemetery," one advocate says. "They put 30 or 40 corpses in each hole. Then they put a lot of numbers on the plaques on the graves, but no names. The families were told 'your relative is buried at al-Alia and his number is X' and the family could go to the grave.

"The parents of one of my clients who was killed received a telegram that their son was in the Bouloghine morgue but when they went there, they weren't allowed in. They finally learnt he was buried at al-Alia. The government says they are going to investigate the prison deaths. But who do they appoint to the inquiry? Meziane Cherif one of the biggest eradicateurs in the government."

If Sekardji was the authority's revenge for the suicide bombing of the police commissariat in January, the Islamists also regard the prison killings as a political act, intended to destroy the chances of dialogue opened up by opposition parties, including the FIS, at their conference in Rome last month.

"There are hundreds of Sekardjis all over Algeria," one of the Islamists says. "They are doing this in villages. Army helicopters have attacked a village that was believed to be Islamist—it's called Belhacene in the wilaya (province) of Relizane—and killed more than 200 people, including women and children. They razed the village. In another village called Babours in the wilaya of Setif there was a shoot-out last month between the cops and the resistance. Later, the security forces came and killed 25 people in a cafe in the village. They attacked anyone thought to have harboured Islamists."

The FIS leaders, Ali Belhadj and Abbassi Madani, are now in government custody far from Algiers: according to opposition sources, Belhadj is in a prison camp at Ein Megnel near the Sahara city of Tamanrasset, Madani is locked up at Illez, a village near the Libyan border. But this will not end the war either against the Algerian government, its supporters, the country's intellectuals, journalists and feminists or France, which is seen as the government's principal foreign ally. There may soon, too, be another country in the sights of the Islamist armed groups: the United States.

One usually moderate Islamist read to me carefully from a piece of paper upon which was written an obviously prepared statement. "We are hearing things about the American government which does not please us," he read slowly, glancing at me from time to time to ensure that I was taking notes. "We hear that the US government has given to the Algerian police a computer network that recognises fingerprints. Only Japan and the United States have these computers and Japan refused to sell it to the Algerian government for political reasons. We hear that the US has sold it and that it was furnished by an American company. If it is true, we consider this a hostile action... France is a known enemy but we don't understand this action of our US friends."

It was as near to a threat as you could hear in Algiers these days, and a clear warning to Washington to stay out of the tragedy here at a time when the Algerian government is ever more anxious to present itself, Israeli-style, as the vanguard against "world Islamic terror". But if even a fraction of what the Islamists say is true, terror springs from both sides in Algeria. And given the rapid deterioration of events, the torture chambers, death squads and "special" police units will have much more work to do in the coming weeks. So will the gravediggers at the al-Alia cemetery.

Women Targeted as Victims in 'Terrorist' Attacks

LD1303133495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning a group of six terrorists burst into the Lazhar Mohamed School, located in Oued Djerch in the province of Blida. They took away 15-year old pupil Fatima Ghodban, killed her by slitting her throat—only 10 meters away from the school—and brought her lifeless body back to the school entrance.

At 0500 on 11 March, in the province of Boumerdes, three terrorists armed with a hunting rifle shot dead two sisters, Karima Guedjali, 21, unemployed, and Amel, 18, a student. The crime took place inside the victims' home in the DNC [expansion unknown] housing estate in Reghaia.

In another incident on 11 March, eight armed terrorists murdered Yamani Ammarani, 26, and unemployed, in her home in the farming village of Tessala al-Mardjane, also in the province of Blida. Yamami was married and nine months pregnant. They took the victim's jewelry before fleeing.

Ait-Ahmed Calls For Multiparty Election Dialogue

MM1303144595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Reports by Ahmad Kamal Hamdi in Bonn, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT bureau in London, and agencies in Algeria: "Ait-Ahmed Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Elections Prefabricated"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hocine Ait-Ahmed, secretary general of the Algerian Socialist Forces Front [FFS] has stated that the presidential elections for which the Algerian Government is making preparations are already prefabricated. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, he stressed that Algeria needed legislative and constitutional elections as well as a transitional period and a general national conference on the basis of the Rome document. [passage omitted]

In Bonn, Algerian opposition leader Hocine Ait-Ahmed told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that he was sad to see a civil war raging in Algeria which has claimed no less that 40,000 lives in addition to the economic and social collapse in the country over the last three years. He said that Algeria was at an impasse and that the only way out of the crisis was a comprehensive solution based on democracy and pluralism.

He said that the Rome document, which he helped draft, was the only solution and the main basis for dialogue among all the parties and that negotiations involving all parties was the only way. He said that he had not tried to form an antigovernment front in Rome but had instead thoroughly outlined a peaceful, political, and democratic solution, but the Algerian Government rejected any dialogue with other parties. He said he hoped the government would change that policy after ascertaining that dialogue was the basis of any future solution. He maintained that the international community supported that line, adding that the dialogue did not fail because it never started. [passage omitted]

Zeraoul on Election Policy

MM1303164195 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 13 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Zeroual Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Will Continue Dialogue Policy To Achieve Algerian People's Interests]

[FBIS Translated Text] Copenhagen—Algerian President Liamine Zeroual has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Copenhagen that the presidential elections scheduled to be held in Algeria this year will give everyone the chance to participate.

He pointed out that his government will continue to pursue the national dialogue policy in order to achieve the Algerian people's interests.

President Zeroual welcomed French President Francois Mitterrand's statements on Algerian-French relations.

President Mitterrand said before departing the Danish capital the evening before last that there are no differences between France and Algeria, stressing that France does not interfere in the affairs of others. Mitterrand added that "we neither supported nor rejected the Rome [opposition] meetings, and the solution is in the hands of the Algerians, who run their own affairs."

Algerian presidential sources have welcomed the French president's statements, stressing that noninterference is liable to eliminate the causes of the recent tension in French-Algerian relations.

Egypt

Writer Questions Reasons for Christopher Trip

NC1003161195 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 1

[Editorial by Chief Editor Mursi 'Atallah: "Why Does Christopher Come Amid These Clouds?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Why does U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher again repeat his attempt and comes to the Middle East although most signs affirm that he has found nothing new and that Israel persists in its intransigent stance on the main issues, which is causing dense clouds to gather over the region? Why is Christopher gambling when he is not sure of success, particularly in view of evident Israeli obstruction in the implementation of the provisions of the Declaration of Principles agreement with the PLO and placement of obstacles in the way of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, let alone its arrogant and unjustified stance on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?

If the motive for embarking on this tour is merely another attempt in a series of them to emphasize the continuation of U.S. interest in the Middle East peace process, I maintain that this explanation reflects undue oversimplification of matters, especially for a superpower suffering from economic and domestic crises that dictate that the United States temporarily focus and give priority to its domestic problems.

Then what is the reason behind this trip? There are numerous reasons related to purely U.S. goals and others revolving around growing fears that the current stumbling in the negotiations may lead to the emergence of extremist and terrorist forces on both sides hostile to the peace process. These forces might torpedo the peace process and take the region back to the era of wars, conflicts, and hatred and to possible consequences and unknown changes in the Middle East equation.

I would like to explain my view of these reasons one by one beginning with those relating to the U.S. goals:

1. Despite the mounting economic and domestic crises, the U.S. Administration still believes that a window of success is still open in the Middle East. It believes that if its shuttle diplomacy achieves a resounding success, this might reduce the growing criticism of the failure of its domestic policy and open the door for greater influence and interests in the whole region, generating economic, political, and moral benefits that the Clinton administration badly needs.

Preserving the vital strategic interests in this sensitive part of the world is one of the most important documents in the American file. The United States will be fighting for these documents so that it can have the upper hand in any new world order, particularly since in Washington they know very well that the current transitional stage where one superpower is in control is not acceptable worldwide and is doomed to end. In addition, they realize that this role is beyond the ability of the United States itself, even if Washington wants it.

The experience of the second Gulf war and the circumstances behind the U.S. military achievements during "Desert Storm" to liberate Kuwait under the umbrella of the international alliance have convinced Washington that there is no contradiction between U.S. commitment to establishing special relations with Israel on the one hand and the objective requirements for building, developing, and strengthening relations of friendship and cooperation with the Arab world on the other.

If we move on to the overall reasons that motivate the United States to show interest in saving the peace process from what it is being subjected to, then we would have to point out that there is some noticeable change in the U.S. understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict very different from its understanding before the peace process and the second Gulf war revealed the importance of balancing U.S. relations with the Arabs and the Israelis equally.

Perhaps I could be clearer and say that the Americans have become much more aware of the fact that in the Middle East they are dealing with a crisis that is loaded with contradictory and explosive elements, among which are historic, doctrinal, and psychological factors. In addition, so long as they have taken on the role of mediator, they have to be more patient. They must also be careful about informing both sides, particularly the Arab side, that they are neutral in their mediation role and are trying to achieve the final objective of establishing peace under the umbrella of international legitimacy and its resolutions.

In Washington they realize that if the region reverts from the peace process, unmeasurable violence will break out, extremism will grow, and dangers will emerge, all of which will be difficult to contain within the framework of the region and its geographic and political boundaries.

I think that the people in Washington realize that Egypt's stance on the Israeli nuclear program is no longer a political and diplomatic one but has become an obsession of Egyptian and Arab public opinion, as well as the whole Middle East, whose development they are dreaming of in the post-peace stage.

There can be no peace in view of the nuclear hegemony of one side.

Israeli 'Declaration' on NPT Question Expected

NC1303141295 Paris AFP in English 1141 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 13 (AFP)—Egypt expects a positive gesture from Israel within the next three weeks on their row over the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a foreign ministry official said Monday [13 March].

"I expect an Israeli declaration on the question of the NPT within the next three weeks," Jamal Bayyumi, head of the Israel section in the foreign ministry, told AFP.

"If it comes, it will be followed by an Egyptian response pertaining to the international desire to reapprove the treaty," at a New York conference in April-May, he said.

"If Israel commits itself to joining the treaty within a certain period, Egypt could vote for its reapproval while reserving the right to reconsider its position at the end of that period."

President Husni Mubarak has "already stated that if Israel makes a positive step, Egypt will take two steps forward in its direction," he added. "If Israel makes a generous gesture, it will find Egypt doubly generous."

The Israeli daily HA'ARETZ reported in February that the Jewish state was considering for the first time a schedule for denuclearization of the Middle East.

It said Israel was prepared to sign the NPT two years after sealing peace treaties with all countries in the Middle East.

"Egypt cannot impose on future generations commitments which may threaten the country's national security in the future," Bayyumi said, defending refusal to sign the renewal unless Israel joins up.

The official warned of other repercussions.

"The serious dispute between Egypt and Israel over the NPT affects the outlook for regional economic cooperation," he said. "We cannot talk of regional cooperation including Israel when that country is holding a gun to our heads."

Egypt has proposed a compromise under which Israel would commit itself to signing the NPT within three years of its renewal, according to a high official in the foreign ministry.

The Jewish state would also have to take immediate measures to halt its alleged nuclear weapons program.

Mubarak Notes Flexibility on NPT Signing Date

NC1303172995 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak urged Israel to commit itself to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] to give a boost to the Middle East peace process.

In an interview with REUTER during his current visit to Japan, President Mubarak stressed that Israel must join the treaty, noting that if it will not do so now, then at least we must negotiate to know when it will.

President Mubarak emphasized that Egypt is being flexible about when Israel should join the NPT on condition that it shows willingness to hold negotiations over the issue.

Concerning the Middle East peace process, President Mubarak remarked that unless the living standards of the West Bank's citizens are raised, there will be no peace.

Commenting on joint Egyptian-Japanese projects, President Mubarak said that the bridge that will be built over the Suez Canal to link Africa with Asia will facilitate trade and investments between Egypt and the Gulf region.

Country Ready To Begin Nuclear Energy Program

NC1303215695 Paris AFP in English 1932 GMT 13 Mar 95

[By Lee Keath]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 13 (AFP)—Egypt is ready to begin a nuclear energy program whenever politicians decide to take the step, the director of Egypt's Nuclear Reactor Agency [NRA] Hafiz Higgi told AFP Monday [13 March].

"We are in a state of readiness, waiting only for the political decision," he said.

The NRA has produced proposals for building a reactor to produce electricity and the government is studying them, Higgi added.

Egypt began building a laboratory reactor with a 22 megawatt capacity this year, Higgi said.

The project, costing 400 million Egyptian pounds (118 million dollars), is being implemented in cooperation with Argentina and will be completed in five years, he added.

A smaller laboratory reactor with a seven megawatt capacity has been in use since the former Soviet Union helped Egypt build it 1961.

One of the proposed sites for a working reactor is the Al-Dabbah region, 150 km (93 miles) west of the northern port of Alexandria, Higgi said.

While it is too early to estimate the capacity or cost of a working reactor, "the current trend is to build medium-sized reactors, perhaps 600 kilowatts, because they are cheaper and safer," said Mamduh 'Abd-al-Ghaffar, the vice president of the Nuclear Materials Agency.

Egypt has considerable deposits of uranium in the Sinai and the Red Sea area and has been mining them in small amounts for its laboratory reactor for years, he added.

The Egyptian nuclear program, begun in the early 1960s, has suffered three decades of delays and lack of government commitment.

"We have faced a number of problems. The wars of 1967 and 1973 set back the program, then the Chernobyl accident (in 1986) had a large effect. We had to completely reconsider safety procedures," Higgi said.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak ordered the program halted after the Chernobyl accident. Over 300 Egyptian nuclear experts left the country during the next 10 years.

"We signed onto the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (in 1968) so that we could create a peaceful nuclear energy capacity, but we haven't used the experience that we have in the field," Higgi said.

The original government program aimed at producing seven nuclear reactors by the end of the century, former president of the Atomic Energy Agency 'Izzat 'Abd-al-'Aziz told the opposition daily AL-WAFD on Monday.

"Where have we been for thirty years? We have been stumbling while Israel has openly pursued development of their nuclear energy capabilties. We have respected the NPT and stuck to it" 'Abd-al-'Aziz said.

Egypt has refused to back an indefinite extension of the NPT due for renewal at a UN conference next month until Israel commits itself to joining the treaty.

Article Analyzes Cairo's Nuclear Treaty Policy

95LD0029B Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 15 Jan 95 p 5

[Article by Taha al-Majdub]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his recent press interviews, President Husni Mubarak defined Egypt's position on a central issue closely linked with the peace process: the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear arms. In doing so, President Mubarak has emphasized a firm strategic line in Egyptian policy. In his statements to Israeli Television and the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-WATAN, the president emphasized several points, the most significant of which were the following:

1. Egypt was the first to propose that the Middle East area be made free of mass-destruction weapons (his excellency announced his initiative in this respect in April 1990).

2. Egypt cannot force Israel to sign the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, but it can refrain from signing the document to extend the treaty unless Israel signs it, because the establishment of peace demands that both Egypt and Israel sign the treaty.

3. The establishment of just and comprehensive peace in the area is Egypt's strategic option. It is Egypt's historic responsibility to try to spare the area the perils of comprehensive peace.

Israel has strongly opposed these Egyptian political views, because they represent pressure in an extremely important security issue. The United States also has opposed these views, because they contradict its planned strategy in the area, of which Israel represents one of the strategy's principal tools.

Ambassador Thomas Graham, deputy director of the U.S. Agency for Arms Control, held a news conference in Washington last December following a visit to Cairo. He emphasized the need to convince Egypt that it is in its own security interests to accept the extension of the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons for an unlimited period. He also affirmed that, "in principle," the United States would like Israel to sign this treaty, adding that no state can be forced to "take a step contrary to its national security." Graham termed "theoretical" Egypt's position that there are no future guarantees that Israel will not continue to possess nuclear weapons, adding that Israel is not Egypt's enemy; Iran and Iraq are.

We have several basic comments about Graham's remarks. Perhaps the most significant is the one regarding the clearly illogical paradox contained in his statement. He called on Egypt, which does not possess nuclear weapons, to sign the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, because this would be in its own interests, but did not mention the effect of such a move on Egypt's national security. However, he did not offer the same advice to Israel, which possesses nuclear weapons, although this situation poses a serious danger to Egypt and the Middle East and although Egypt is considered Israel's second enemy after Syria, according to a classification by Israeli academic institutes and strategic thinkers.

As for Egypt's position, which Graham described as "theoretical," it raises some questions and confirms that his remark contradicts reality. Israel possesses nuclear warheads, and missiles that can carry them to any Arab capital. It also possesses nuclear bombs that American-made F-16 aircraft stationed at the Israeli Tel Nof airbase can carry. Does this not represent an actual threat not only to Egypt but also to all the Arab states that lie within the range of Israel missiles and the American-made aircraft?

Does not Israel's refusal to sign the treaty confirm that Israel wants to use its nuclear deterrent to influence all the states in the area and deepen the feelings of anxiety in Egypt and the Arab world? Does not this give Egypt and the Arabs every right to confront this threat and to demand that the least Israel can do is not only sign the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, which allows it to retain its existing nuclear weapons, but also to call on it to get rid of all its nuclear stockpiles? This is a basic step for establishing the principles for complete arms control in the Middle East and for ending the arms race, allowing all states to devote their resources to development and to strengthening cooperation among their peoples.

Egypt has been exercising its full responsibility in this regard for many years, relying in its activity on President Mubarak's April 1990 initiative to clear the Middle East area of all mass-destruction weapons. However, everyone must fully realize the real dangers that will result from the spread of nuclear weapons in the Middle East if Israel is allowed to do what it likes and retain its "nuclear deterrent" to impose its hegemony on the area.

A concrete development has taken place in the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. A shift from a state of armed conflict to a state of peaceful coexistence and from a state of war to a state of peace and regional cooperation has begun. This invalidates Israel's excuse to retain nuclear weapons. Economic cooperation will create common interests, requiring security cooperation to safeguard them. This will not be achieved before an essential initial step is taken to open the way to arms control in the area and prevent the possibility of an arms race, which can lead to disturbances, tension, and instability. This step is the joint signing of the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons in the area.

From this premise, Egypt, supported by the Arab states, has insisted on the need to link comprehensive peace with the need for Israel to get rid of its nuclear weapons, fulfill its international obligations, and submit its nuclear installations to international inspection and examination. This Egyptian national and pan-Arab position is closely tied to the philosophical and scientific structure of the Egyptian national security strategy as an indivisible part of the Arab national security.

Furthermore, this position is based on several fundamental elements, the most important of which are:

During the past 25 years, the treaty for the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons has failed to achieve the purposes for which it was concluded—first, because of the Cold War conditions; and second, because of the many faults it contains. These faults must be reviewed and amendments must be made so the treaty can become more effective and consistent with current conditions and the new world order. To form one of the new world order's pillars, all the countries of the world must implement the treaty. The removal of mass—destruction weapons should become universal.

The U.S. proposal to extend the treaty for an unlimited period without providing controls or guarantees does not seriously solve the arms problems in the Middle East, because it is based on double standards and unequal treatment of the parties concerned in the Middle East. It does not protect all the countries in the area against an Israeli nuclear threat and does not prompt Israel to give up its nuclear arsenal. This creates an extreme strategic defect in the balance of power in the area; consequently, peace loses one of its most important elements of stability: mutual security.

Israel's possession of nuclear warheads, ballistic missiles, and aircraft capable of carrying nuclear bombs raises some of the most complex problems for the future of Arab-Israeli relations and pose a security problem that could be more complex than the territorial problem. This is because the threat this time is directed against the peoples' existence and survival, where there is no room for bargaining or compromise solutions. The Arab citizen's feeling that Israel is still the "enemy" threatening his life and existence confirms the continued existence of this security problem. Therefore, the Arab states and the Middle East states, in general, will do all they can to possess mass-destruction tools and nuclear weapons. This is something that is not difficult to do anymore.

Such a dangerous Israeli disposition makes Israel unqualified to face the peace obligations and responsibilities and safeguard regional security and stability. This will continue to be the case as long as it is unable to separate itself from the ideology of power, which is based on the principle of superiority stemming from Biblical fundamentalism and Zionist ideology. Israel's possession of nuclear weapons will undoubtedly increase the sense of discrimination and satisfy its fanatical instinct of superiority. However, it will stand in the way of any attempt to establish a close link with its Arab neighbors or become fully integrated into the area, because one of the most important elements of the conflict is still unresolved. While the Arabs might be prepared to accept Israel among them, they are not prepared to accept it with its nuclear bomb.

Undoubtedly, the nuclear issue has always been on the mind of Egyptian diplomacy. Despite all the skirmishes that took place on this issue in the past, it has not emerged as the center of the security issue in the Middle East as it has now. Egyptian diplomacy thought that the present stage in the peace process is the most suitable for linking the peace talks with the talks about this central issue. Otherwise, it would not be possible to do anything about it and the issue could then become detrimental to the peace process.

It was no longer possible for peaceful relations between two countries to continue while one party maintained its military superiority and possessed nuclear weapons. Otherwise, this party could attempt to base all solutions to economic, political, and security problems on power rather than on common or mutual interests. To deal with this vital issue, Egyptian diplomacy has acted, and its action was in the right direction. After clearly defining Egypt's position, Egyptian diplomacy tried to coordinate positions to create a unified Arab and international stand on the issue. It was also necessary to gain from experience in this respect. The Arab states signed the treaty and had continued to respect their obligations over the past 25 years, receiving no rights in return. However, the nuclear countries in the area continued to maintain their positions without any obligations. Israel persisted in its refusal to sign the treaty, whereas the Arab states continued to face pressure to extend the treaty indefinitely. This would have made it possible to confirm existing situations and freeze the ability to make any changes in the regional situation in this regard. Egypt, therefore, has refused to sign the treaty under these conditions.

Undoubtedly, the coordination of the Arab positions, championed by Egypt, represents an essential basis for a united Arab action to deal with the issue of arms control, as a vital factor for stability and security. Including Israel in any regional security arrangements would be difficult unless the nuclear threat to its expected partners is removed.

This is the position of Egypt, which cares very much for the peace process. Egypt is not demanding that the peace process be suspended or canceled. But it is calling for Arab unity and a firm position on this vital issue. They should suspend any new steps to develop the peace process, particularly in terms of economic cooperation with Israel, as long as the latter continues to insist on retaining the nuclear deterrent.

Pan-Arab responsibility demands that the Arabs adopt a unified position, supporting Egypt's demand to remove Israel's nuclear weapons and freeze cooperation with it as long as it continues to possess mass-destruction weapons, which threaten the future of the Arab homeland and its national security.

Commentary Criticizes Investment Climate

95LD0030C Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic
26 Jan 95 p 3

[Commentary by Sa'id Sunbul]

[FBIS Translated Text] There is a big difference between a development philosophy and a tax collection philosophy; between a philosophy that looks toward the future and a philosophy that looks no further than the tip of its feet; between a philosophy with a vision that promotes planting the land and building factories and waits until the wheel turns and a philosophy that is not content with the dates but that uproots the palm trees that produce the dates!

A development philosophy looks at issues and deals with them through a comprehensive futuristic vision. Consequently, it creates a climate that promotes investment and development. Meanwhile, a collection philosophy is content to look under its feet and to squeeze out whatever is in the pockets. Consequently, it creates a climate that expels investment and impedes development.

It is evident that the collection philosophy has dominated government policy in recent years. To deal with the general budget deficit, the Ministry of Finance has devised artful ways to collect money from the people with all means and with all customary and uncustomary methods. The ministry has been so creative that it has levied taxes on taxes, and this is something the people have not seen since the days of the Mamlukes.

This policy has encouraged various government authorities and agencies to employ the collection approach, and they have been competing to squeeze out whatever is in the peoples pockets and to blackmail corporations. Professional unions have entered the ring of competition and have, in turn, levied both justifiable and unjustifiable fees and duties!

Within the framework of this feverish struggle, taxes are levied on new companies even before they start activities, before they display any product in the market, and before they earn any return or profit! Desert land is now sold to new companies by the meter instead of being given out free of charge. Power companies have exaggerated their prices and, observing no criteria whatsoever, have imposed exorbitant fees to supply electricity to new investment installations. The money market, the Investment Authority, and the professional unions have been vying in levying taxes and fees and collecting duties!

Investors in Egypt have looked around them and have begun to wonder: What is going on around us? What do they want from us: Carry on or shut our doors? I have personally heard industrialists declare at public meetings—now that the collection philosophy has prevailed and dominated—that they were backing down and suspending new expansions they had planned!

President Mubarak has realized the perils of this shortsighted policy which has created an investment-expelling climate. Recently, he held a series of meetings and conferences that have produced numerous decrees which are capable of purging the investment climate and of restoring confidence to investors' souls. All we hope for is that these meetings are a signal to the government to abandon the collection philosophy and to re-adopt the development philosophy.

Article Examines Rights of Press

95LD0030A Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic
23 Jan 95 p 3

[Article by Said Sunbul in the "Good Morning" Column]

[FBIS Translated Text] I felt relieved when the decision was made to release Adil Husayn, a press writer and the Labor Party secretary. I have known and met with Husayn for 30 years, and we have been tied by friendship and work relations. I disagreed with him in thought and opinion when he was a zealous defendant of the leftist Marxist philosophy. Our disagreement in thought and opinion continued when he shifted to the ranks of the political Islamist tendency. But our friendship and our relations have continued without interruption.

Security forces and investigating authorities charged Adil Husayn with possessing hostile leaflets and contacting terrorist elements! It was then left up to the judiciary to say their word on these charges.

Far from the charges against Adil Husayn and from how true or untrue they might be, the opposition forces managed to transform the question from a security issue, as characterized by the security authorities, to an issue of disciplining opposition thought and opinion! On the other hand, security forces failed to persuade public opinion that the issue was not so much an issue of thought and opinion as it was a security issue.

Nobody claims that journalists or political writers are above the law. But cases involving politicians, writers, and journalists are especially sensitive, even if they are beyond the framework of opinion and thought. This is the thing that security men and investigators must keep in mind when dealing with such cases.

The only weapon a writer possesses is his pen. Unlike pickpockets, he does not keep a penknife in his pocket. A writer says his word and publishes it to the public. He does not plot in the dark, like gang leaders and dangerous people.

Therefore, there must be political sensitivity when dealing with cases involving writers, journalists, and politicians so the cards will not be shuffled and so matters will not be depicted untruthfully. The arrest of a pickpocket, for example, arouses pickpockets, only, whereas the arrest of a writer or a politician arouses the emotions of intellectuals, writers, and journalists. Therefore, writers, thinkers, and politicians must be treated differently from pickpockets and highwaymen.

If we lived under the canopy of a totalitarian regime that does not acknowledge human rights and that denies people the right to think or to express their opinion, people would shut their mouth and remain silent! But we are proud that Husni Mubarak's era is an era that has not broken a pen; has not confiscated a newspaper; and has not arrested a journalist or a writer. Therefore, it is normal that the arrest of a writer or a journalist—even if not arrested for issues connected with thought—would provoke broad reactions among various sectors for fear that the arrests and investigations would turn into persecution of opposition thinking.

Again, I have felt relieved for the release of Adil Husayn, despite my disagreement with his thoughts and tendencies.

Intellectual Affirms African Role

95LD0030B Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 5 Jan 95 p 11

[Article by Dr. Sa'id al-Lawundi]

[FBIS Translated Text] This genuine African man (Dr. Hasan Fessas) considers Egypt, where he spent his cultural and intellectual training years, his second country. He studied at Cairo University, where he got his licence in French. He also got a degree in higher studies from al-Azhar University. Fessas held the position of dean [doyen] of the African student community in Egypt for several years. He is a descendant of a family that is deep-rooted in wealth and struggle in the Republic of Benin (previously Dahomey), which is adjacent to Togo and Nigeria. He belongs to Benin's Muslim majority, even though official statistics show, according to Fessas, that Muslims are a minority representing nearly 30 percent of the entire people of Benin, who number nearly 5 million. He works currently as a lecturing professor at (Tantier) [as published] University (Paris 10), where he obtained his doctorate in social sciences and politics.

Fessas' initial connection with Egypt dates back to the distant years of his early youth when his father used to ask Hasan to listen with him to the speeches of the late President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir on the Voice of the Arabs Radio, which could be heard in Benin. Dr. Hasan recalls that he listened with admiration to a 1958 speech President 'Abd-al-Nasir delivered during the Algerian revolution. As a youth, his father sent him to Egypt to continue his studies in the country, where he established firm relations with a number of Egyptian officials of that era. He says that he accompanied his country's interior minister, a man called Muhammad Harun (or Mamo Arona, as his tribesmen called him) and met some Egyptian figures, including Mamduh Salim and Muhammad Tawfiq Uwaydah. Dr. Fessas developed firm relations with Uwaydah, who held the position of chairman of the Supreme Islamic Affairs Council at the time. Upon returning to his country, whose name was changed from Dahomey to Benin in 1975, Dr. Fessas carried on with the struggle for the Arabic language and for the faith, following in the footsteps of his great grandfather, Imam Saroko, who was the imam of the central mosque in Porto-Novo, the capital. Dr. Fessas asserts that he is fully convinced that the bond with the West will lead to nothing but more grief and to a grave loss. This is why his cultural and political plan calls for bonds with the Islamic states and for working with them in unison to revive the language of the Koran, because it is, in his viewpoint, the best means for achieving proximity and strengthening bonds among speakers of this language.

Dr. Hasan Fessas noted that he ran as a presidential candidate in Benin's 1991 election and that his platform was based on reviving the Arabic language. He is the only Muslim [presidential] candidate in the history of the Republic of Benin. He was also the only candidate to make Arabic the center piece of his political program. In this regard, Dr. Fessas does not conceal his hostility to the West which, despite the end of the era of slavery, still deals with Africans from the same imperialist perspective that gives whites control and influence and blacks nothing but obedience to orders and compliance with the wishes of others!

Dr. Fessas asserts that the West does not want Islam to be able to put up any resistance in black Africa and that it fears any Islamic renaissance or revival there. This is why the West is keen on tying this continent to its developmental patterns within a framework that is much stronger than the framework of subservience. Benin's cultural language is French, and 20 percent of the population speaks nothing else. This is in addition to English and German. As for Arabic, which many people know, it has no place in the minds of the officials in charge of the educational system.

Dr. Fessas interprets this conduct as a continuation of the policy to marginalize Muslims in Benin. He wonders angrily:

Will we Africans be forced to live submissively and in humiliation throughout coming centuries? Or do we have to change ourselves on the basis of the Koranic principle that says, Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves [Koran 13:11]. The start of real change is, in his opinion, in focusing on teaching the Arabic language and in insisting that it be spoken by both young and old.

Dr. Fessas added, Israel followed this policy with its language, Hebrew, and this language has regained its glow, which had vanished for centuries. So, why should we not speak Arabic, which could be an effective instrument of unification among 1 billion Muslims in the world?

Dr. Fessas pointed out that he has tried to form a front, which he called the Arabophone Front [Arabic Speakers' Front] , in Benin and Africa but that his endeavor did not succeed because many failed to participate. He also tried to form an association for graduates of Egyptian universities, especially since Nigeria alone has 300 physicians who graduated from al-Qasr al-Ayni in Egypt, not to mention a large number of ambassadors, ministers, and high-ranking state officials. But Arab ambassadors accredited to Benin did not show enthusiasm for the idea and did not help Fessas. So the idea died in the cradle.

Regarding the Arabic language, Fessas has said: Popular dialects are the main obstacle impeding Arabic because they are greatly different from classical Arabic. Citing an example, he has said: If one learns Arabic in his country and then goes to any other Arab country, it is difficult for him to communicate with people there. But gradually, one forgets what he learned in his native country and speaks with the dialect of the country where he lives. This is the opposite of what happens with one who learns French in his native country. Such a person finds that his residence in France strengthens, enriches, and entrenches his French. This is why Dr. Fessas urges that all efforts be exerted so classical Arabic will be spoken in all Arab and Islamic countries and so it will be taught to children at a very young age.

Regarding Benin's relations with Egypt, Dr. Hasan Fessas has said: There have been good relations since old times. In the 1960s, Egyptian diplomacy was keen on developing Benin as one of its main bases, especially in the face of the Israeli influence that was steadily infiltrating the African continent. Moreover, African students were offered facilities to learn in Egyptian universities, especially in the deep-rooted al-Azhar University. Through the anti-imperialism which filled the atmosphere in Egypt at the time, we felt that we had a message, namely to lead our countries liberation movements.

In other words, we were raised mentally, intellectually, and emotionally in Cairo, which I still view as the Paris of the Arabs and the Muslims. I hope that its doors will remain open to Africans who are jealous for their continent and its peoples. It is my fundamental conviction that there will be no revival for Africa without Egypt which occupies, from Cairo, the place of a heart throbbing with life and promising all the hope of a brighter future.

Finally, it remains to note that Dr. Hasan Fessas told me something I did not know, namely that any African official in any position (in the Francophonic countries) carries the French citizenship simultaneously with that of his country. It is in this capacity as a French citizen that Fessas lives in France and teaches at its universities. When Benin President Soglo arrived sometime ago for treatment at a French hospital, he was treated as a French, not African, citizen.

New Personal ID System Introduced

95LD0035A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 25 Jan 95 p 3

[Article by 'Izzat 'Abd-al-Mun'im: "3,000 Graduates Making a Wall Against Counterfeiting and Cheating"]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Mubarak today visits the Civil Status Department not only to celebrate Police Day, but to inaugurate a project that may modestly be called one of the most important and vital projects—the improvement of the department by the use of a national identity number. It is a historic turning point that will take the department into the 21st century. We bring you the reasons in the following article.

Three thousand graduates of various majors, having received special conversion training, are now silently implementing the largest project to insure citizens and the government. This time, insurance will be achieved not by security measures, but by computer. The goal is to protect citizens' secrets, facilitate their dealings, and combat cases of counterfeiting that lead to rights violations, attacks on property, and threats to citizens' security, as has happened in terrorist operations with their accompanying counterfeiting and false ID cards. How is work progressing on the project and when will it be completed?

Many Defects

To begin with, Major General Ibrahim Busaylah, director of the Civil Status Department, says that ever since handwritten documents concerning citizens' civil status (facts of birth, death, marriage, and divorce), personal identification cards, registry corrections and amendments, and changes of religion have been issued—in other words, from the implementation of the 1962 Civil Status Act to the present time—many defects have come to light. These make the system inadequate to carry out the needs and requirements of citizens, as well as those of government agencies. In Egypt a name is no longer a means of distinguishing a person due to the similarity of the four parts of a name, in addition to the slowness of proceedings given the nature of a handwritten system. Personal Registry Offices can no longer keep up with the population increase. It is so easy to tamper with documents and counterfeit them that they have lost their credibility. Maj. Gen. Busaylah adds that many forms of fraud have therefore arisen. There have been cases of marriage of minor women, loss of citizenship acquisition papers of Egyptians and foreigners, and draft evasion. The latter takes many different forms. If we add the terrorist and criminal elements that engage in fraud to disguise and hide their illegal aims, or incidents aimed at harming the national economy, such as the case of Huda 'Abd-al-Mun'im, who took out loans from banks and fled abroad using a false name, or cases of fraud aimed at controlling the purchase and sale of others' property without the real owner's knowledge—all these negative byproducts have necessitated an improvement of the civil status system by using a national number as a way to distinguish citizens.

Foreign System

The director of the Civil Status Department adds: We began to think about improvement between 1982 and 1990. It was proposed that a foreign company should implement it. A personal identity number was to be issued to anyone who reached the age of 16. A card was to be issued by the Health Ministry to newborn infants, and another card was to be issued by the Education Ministry to those entering school. Our thinking later turned toward the project of a national number. Lest foreigners infiltrate the Egyptian information system, it was to be done in an untraditional way drawing on native expertise and using 3,000 young graduates. After they were given conversion training on data entry, the system was inaugurated.

Three Main Points

The director indicates that the national number plan is based on three points. It includes building the first national citizens' data base with data entered into computers, linking members of a single family, and issuing mechanized personal identifications that are difficult to counterfeit. The first stage, that of building the first computerized data base and linking all those born in Egypt to a unique national number for each, has been completed. I can state that the data base contains 87 million birth entries, 34 million death entries, 25 million marriage entries, and 2.2 million divorce entries. Through this data base the national resource embodied in the information contained in paper registers affected by the passage of time will be protected, and the information stored in them will become clear. The data base was completed in record time. For example, the entry of births was supposed to take four years to complete, but it was done in less than three.

From Birth to Death

He adds: Law 143 passed in 1994 provided for mechanization of the civil status system and issuance of all status documents in secure, mechanized form. The law includes some new features. Most importantly, the department is authorized to assign a unique, unrecurring national number to each citizen, to be given at birth and used throughout life. The law defined those responsible for reporting births. It treated males and females alike in terms of the requirement to obtain a card at age 16 and obliged all citizens to carry the card. It obliged judicial apprehension authorities to examine cards without confiscating them. The legislation was one of the first pieces of legislation in the world protecting data bases from entry and tampering.

Fourteen Digits Per Citizen

As for the selection method for the national number, Maj. Gen. Busaylah indicated that by the decision of the interior minister a committee was formed with representatives of all the original agencies involved in dealing with the national number. It concluded that a 14-digit national number should be used. The first place on the left will be for the century of birth. Two places will be devoted to the year of birth. Two places will be for the month of birth, two for the day, and two for the governorate. Then will come the newborn's serial number and the examination or insurance number. A main computer and a supplementary one have been acquired and a data base has been entered on them. Stations and sites for issuing the new cards have been established in Cairo, Ismailia, and al-Gharbiyah. Sites for the same purpose have been established in Alexandria, al-Mansurah, al-Minya, Asyut, and Aswan. A committee has been formed to decide on proposals from international corporations that have the international technology and expertise. The work of deciding is scheduled to be finished in May. The new cards will be issued gradually during the second half of this year.

Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Busaylah adds: Many parties will benefit from the national number project. Citizens, first of all: they will enjoy rapid service marked by precision, security, and safety in obtaining information and determining identity unambiguously. Given what the project will accomplish regarding the fundamental structure of the Egyptian population, clarifying the population fabric, and utilizing its details, a service will be performed to government agencies that rely on such information in their planning: the ministries of Health, Planning, Education, Population and Housing, Local Administration, Insurance, Defense, Interior (providing election lists), and Finance. Other parties, such as the private sector and banks, will be provided with information for a fee.

Maj. Gen. Ibrahim Busaylah states that within five years of the project's experimental inauguration it will be extended to all parts of the country. He notes that 100 million pounds have been used to date in the context of implementing the national number project. The cards will carry a variety of information: name, date and place of birth, occupation, sex, religion, personal status, and address. With the issuance of these cards, the family cards will be cancelled.

Maj. Gen. Busaylah indicates that under directives from Interior Minister Maj. Gen. Hasan al-Alfi to facilitate civil status service for citizens, 120 new civil registry offices have been opened and placed in operation in the governorates. Twenty additional offices have been established in al-Minya, al-Sharqiyah, al-Minufiyah, al-Gharbiyah, Bani Suwayf, al-Fayyum, Qina, and al-Daqahliyah to keep pace with the development that the Civil Status Department is witnessing.

Libya

GPC Secretary Meets Vietnamese Official

LD1103163995 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1600 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sirte, 11 Mar—The brother secretary of the General People's Congress [GPC] this morning met Nguyen Ha Phan, the vice chairman of the National Assembly in the Republic of Vietnam, who is currently visiting the Great Jamahiriyah.

During this meeting the head of the Vietnamese delegation expressed the great esteem in which the Vietnamese people and leadership hold the brother leader of the revolution and the Libyan Arab people, referring to the aid that the Libyan Arab people had given to the Vietnamese people during the stubborn American invasion of his country. [passage omitted]

He stressed the strength of the bilateral relations that bind the two friendly peoples and their common struggle against imperialism. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Radio Reports King's Ongoing U.S. Visit

LD1403003095 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] To begin with, we open the line for the radio correspondent accompanying the royal visit to the United States of America: colleague Mohamed Djad from Washington. [passage omitted]

The talks which the gracious monarch will hold with U.S. President Bill Clinton and with senior officials of the U.S. Administration and the Congress are expected to produce important results, due to the diversity of the issues to be discussed, be it in connection with bilateral relations, or international issues which attract the attention of the leaders of the two countries—especially the peace process in the Middle East, the conditions in the Arab Maghreb region, and the situation in the Arabian Gulf.

It is worth pointing out that this is the first visit of its kind to be carried out by the leader of an Arab country since the beginning of this year. It will also allow for the first meeting between his majesty the king and the U.S. President, which would undoubtedly allow for exchanging points of view on different international issues, and examining the prospects of consolidating cooperation in development, economic, trade, cultural, and scientific spheres, where his majesty the king is expected to encourage U.S. businessmen and industrialists to invest in Morocco, which has become, thanks to its economic potentials and its political orientations, entitled to play an active role in promoting international trade after it hosted the GATT agreement meetings and the conference on the economic development in Middle East and North Africa.

The importance of this visit lies in the fact that it would work towards strengthening bilateral relations, and discussion of Arab issues, in the forefront of which is the Palestinian file.

The agenda is expected to be condensed in the light of the international developments and the economic changes which are witnessed by a world moving towards the establishment of a new world order. [passage omitted]

In the midst of the increasing interest in the expected results of this visit, THE NEW YORK TIMES carried a press statement which his majesty had made to this newspaper and in which his majesty talked about the peace process concerning the Middle East and the issue of the sanctions imposed on Iraq and the problem of religious extremism.

Concerning the peace process, his majesty warned against the stumbling of the peace process which had driven Arabs and Israelis to take extremist attitudes. His majesty the king stressed that a wave of instability might blast the region unless the peace efforts make some progress before the coming the U.S. and Israeli elections in the summer.

His majesty said in this statement that he will be asking the U.S. President Bill Clinton on Wednesday to reexamine the repercussions of the sanctions imposed on Iraq and Libya. The illustrious monarch said that Iraq is a nation as well as a country. One must not look at Iraq as Saddam Husayn's Iraq but one must think about Iraq in ten or fifteen or twenty years from now. Consequently humiliating or making a people submit without thinking about what this might produce must not continue.

His majesty affirmed that the sanctions should be studied in the light of their economic and social effects on the countries which are bearing the sanctions as well as other countries and neighbors and he observed that Morocco at present is losing nearly one billion dollars as a result of the sanctions imposed on Libya and Iraq.

Concerning religious extremism, his illustrious majesty pointed out that one must not mix Islam and religious extremism. He explained that the extremists call for their ideology because they consider Islam as a means to gain power. His majesty, may God make him victorious, in his statement to THE NEW YORK TIMES criticized the NATO alliance statement which called for combating Islamic extremism. The illustrious king said that the NATO organization is a defensive organization that relates to the North Atlantic. It was established not to combat religious extremism, but to combat Soviet forces.

Concerning a question related to the manner in which the Jerusalem issue should be solved, his majesty said that the Israelis must concede some territory with regard to the final status of Jerusalem.

This has been the radio correspondents' report from Washington.

Sudan

Opposition Leader: Goal To 'Topple' Regime

JN1303195595 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 9 Mar 95 p 23

[Report by Fathi al-Daw in Nairobi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Staff Brigadier General 'Abd-al-'Aziz Khalid, commander of the military wing of the Sudanese opposition, has said that the priority of this organization is to activate the armed uprising against the ruling National Islamic Front [NIF] regime in Khartoum.

In an exclusive interview with AL-WATAN, he said: We are not in a hurry to get results, but we seek success.

He said: Our goal is to topple the regime that has humiliated and suppressed the Sudanese citizens, confiscated their freedom, and distorted Sudan's foreign relations by exporting terrorism to fraternal and friendly states.

Brig. Gen. Khalid stressed that they coordinate with the opposition forces that raise arms, particularly the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] led by John Garang.

He added that the SPLM's role is to continue to exhaust the Khartoum regime through guerrilla warfare in the south. Brig. Gen. Khalid said that the NIF regime has been pursuing hysterical policies toward the Sudanese Armed Forces, resulting in the rise of the percentage of retirees to 78 percent and the killing of about 50,000 personnel over the past five years. He said: We aim to establish a civilian state that ensures integration among the various nationalities and cultures of the Sudanese people, a state that respects religions and beliefs, calls for democracy, enriches the values of virtue, and respects human rights.

Peace Achieved in 80% of War-Torn Areas

EA1103155095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Lino Rol Deng, secretary general of the Supreme Council for Peace, has confirmed that peace has currently been achieved in 80 percent of the war-affected areas as a result of concerted popular effort and support for peace so that it may become a visible reality.

His excellency reiterated the government's eagerness to expedite a comprehensive peace process which would activate the economy and lessen the central government's role in financing projects in the new states in the country.

He explained that 90 percent of the work of the peace council comprised popular effort in receiving returnees and winning them over, particularly fighters, and persuading them to return to the fold of the homeland. He said the council was currently striving in coordination with the armed forces, to create a mechanism to absorb military returnees who fulfilled the conditions of the armed forces, and to include returning political leaders in political work.

Al-Bashir Meets Algerian, Ethiopian Presidents

EA1103171195 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the periphery of the Copenhagen summit conference for social development, Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, acquainted himself with the political developments in Ethiopia during his meeting yesterday [10 March] at his residence in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, with Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi.

The meeting dealt with bilateral relations between the two countries. The two sides emphasized the importance of involving the states in the Horn of Africa in preserving the stability and security of the region. The meeting touched on the relationship between Sudan and Eritrea. President Zenawi affirmed he was keen to transcend the differences between the two countries. He stressed the necessity not to allow these differences to weaken the regional set-up.

Lt. Gen. 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, president of the Republic, also met the Algerian president, Liamine Zeroual at the residence of the Algerian president. The two presidents discussed relations between the two countries and the factors that will lead to their consolidation and the importance of exchanging visits to develop these relations. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir expressed his concern over the situation in Algeria, hoping that things return normal and complete stability is achieved in Algeria.

For his part, the Algerian president affirmed that what touches Sudan, touches Algeria. He wished for comprehensive peace to prevail in Sudan.

Tunisia

*New Interior Minister Profiled

95AF0050A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 15 Feb 95 pp 26-27

[Article by Ridha Kefi: "Mohamed Jegham, Popular Despite Himself"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunisia's new minister of interior is not at all like his predecessors, a fact that ensures him a degree of success.

The new resident of the imposing gray building on Habib Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis, headquarters of the Ministry of Interior, is far from being a neophyte. Mohamed Jegham is, as Tunisians like to say when they "adopt" someone, "oueld eddar" (one of the family). In Tunis, the courteous and elegant 50-year-old Jegham enjoys a reputation as a calm and self-assured man. So his return to the fold did not surprise anyone. And for good reason: in the corridors of the administration as well as among those in the know, his name was already on everyone's lips. And had been for several months.

With that reassuring image of a "good father, good husband," Mohamed Jegham quickly won over his compatriots, who are usually not very magnanimous toward their politicians. And that was all it took for rumor to "appoint" him to increasingly important posts. By naming him minister of interior and member of the Political Bureau of the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD)—the party in power—President Ben Ali was therefore strengthening Tunisians in the respect they feel for the man.

Discussing that appointment, a newspaper editor called it "a fully deserved promotion." And he explained: "In the minipolls that we are in the habit of conducting every December to determine which men and women have distinguished themselves in their fields of activity during the year, the name of Mohamed Jegham has appeared on practically a regular basis. And there is no mistaking a sign like that. The man enjoys a degree of popularity among the most varied social classes. But unlike the situation with many others, his popularity was achieved day by day, and he neither sought it nor did anything to keep it alive.

"One senses in him a certain distance with respect to little vanity games. Touchiness, the sister of megalomania, is visibly not his strong point," adds a hotelkeeper who rubs shoulders with him but does not venture to claim to know him well. Because under an appearance of affability, the man remains secretive, reserved, and protected: "He is very willing to listen to your complaints. He will even seem very understanding toward you. But he will act only on the basis of his own deep convictions," adds a businessman who hastens, however, to warn: "Don't get me wrong. One should not take the man for something that he is not. Because he is definitely not a softy, if in fact any politician can afford such carelessness."

While most of those who have rubbed shoulders with him or simply been in his presence agree that he has certain human qualities, it is the political leader that they prefer to talk about: "Every time he has been able to plead the cause of a firm, he has not hesitated to do so, and he has shown the necessary effectiveness, transparence, and discretion in doing so," says one company executive. "The prime quality that has so far protected him and made him credible in many people's eyes is the neutrality he has often observed in relation to the clans active in the political arena. He is, if one can put it that way, a loner," says a representative of the opposition. And he adds, without cynicism: "Putting the spotlight on him is the greatest disservice you can do him."

Born in Hammam-Sousse on 8 August 1943 (under the sign of Leo—said to be "one sign of a leader"), Mohamed Jegham received his secondary education at the lycee in Sousse. A native "Sahelian," he has a licentiate in economics and is a graduate of the ENA [National Management School in France]. He was only 25 years old when he joined the "company" that he now heads. That was in 1968. The socialist experiment under Ahmed Ben Salah was making no headway, and the bright future was quickly turning sour. The country was already on its knees, and public discontent was at its height. The country would have to learn to get back on its feet. To do so, Tunisia had to count on its own resources. One man was to symbolize that great design for national recovery: Hedi Nouira. To get the country moving again, Bourguiba's new prime minister needed new managers. Mohamed Jegham was one of them. Was he aspiring even then to pursue a fine political career? Probably. At any rate, his path seemed to be already laid out. He was to climb the traditional career ladder generally used by every Tunisian politician: the administration on the one hand and the single party on the other. Have things changed much since then?

Named successively delegate in Beja, Gafsa, and Jendouba, then first delegate in Tunis-Sud, secretary general of the Governorate of Bizerte, and governor of Gabes, the "young cadre of the nation" criss-crossed the country from north to south and east to west, thus getting his start far from the hushed offices in Tunis, where politics is often reduced to its simplest expression: a fratricidal struggle among members of the same clan. From 1980 to 1983 he was first president and CEO of the Sahel Engineering Shops (AMS), the jewel of Tunisian industry, and then head of Sousse-Nord-El-Kantaoui, an upscale tourist complex, which even today still possesses the country's most modern tourist infrastructures (with marina, golf courses, and so on). Recalled to Tunis in 1983, he was made director general of regional affairs in the Ministry of Interior. It was during that period that he again met the man who, on 7 November 1987, would depose an aging and senile president and put the country back to work. That man was the current president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Since fate does not like to do things halfway—the two men are from the same town, have known each other for a long time, and like each other—Ben Ali knew as soon as he became head of state that in Mohamed Jegham he had a trustworthy man who would become part of the small group of men whom he decided to propel swiftly up the career ladder. Scarcely eight months after the change, the shy man in the tortoiseshell glasses found himself being given the Ministry of Tourism.

That was in July 1988. The "Gulf War" was already in the air, but at the time, the term still referred to the interminable wrestling match between Iraq and Iran. On the Eastern front, the armies of triumphant capitalism were seeing the last bastions of communism fall one by one. Freedom, democracy, and human rights were expressions peppering political discourse and taking the media by storm. But the irreparable happened when, in August 1991, the disruptive Iraqi president occupied "brother" Kuwait. The result was North-South war, the CNN, lies, and videotape.

That was all it took to keep European tourists away from the warm beaches in Hammamet, Sousse, and Djerba. For a country like Tunisia, where tourism accounts for over 4 percent of GDP, directly employs 8 percent of the active population, and indirectly supports one out of every eight Tunisians, the crisis was severely felt. Aware of the importance of the tourist equation in the difficult circumstances being experienced by the country, where the rise of fundamentalism was providing additional reasons for concern, Mohamed Jegham did not stand idly by.

"He took up his pilgrim's staff and went door to door," an official in the tourist industry recalls. "One by one, the doors opened. The flow of European tourists resumed. And the situation slowly recovered. In 1992 there was already talk of new records being set. In 1993 and then in 1994, the industry did more than confirm its good health." The man's strength of conviction, his qualities as a manager, and his talent for communication are not unrelated to that success. Although some people, fearing a return to the bad days, prefer to put things in perspective: "The outbreak of war in Yugoslavia and the new wave of Islamic violence in Egypt—two traditional tourist destinations—also contributed to the recovery of Tunisian tourism."

That is true, but it takes nothing away from the merits of Mohamed Jegham, who, for his part, is curiously indifferent to the debate. His modesty is not feigned, as it may be in the case of some politicians. Instead, it reflects a basic shyness that age does not seem to have completely overcome. This does not leave Tunisians indifferent. Having grown accustomed to seeing haughty and inaccessible politicians who are very concerned to live up to their myths, Tunisians have learned to appreciate this man who has not been greatly changed by his many political posts. Does he not drive his own car through the streets of Tunis? Does he not do his own shopping every Sunday at a shopping center in El Manar, an upper-crust suburb of Tunis?

From this minister of interior so unlike others, Tunisians are entitled to expect a great deal. Knowing that in the current state of regional affairs, Tunisia's salvation depends upon the strengthening of its internal front, they are expecting their new minister to make it his priority task to restore meaning and substance to the dialogue between the state and the representatives of civil society. Let us bet that he will not disappoint them.

Western Sahara

President on Possibility of 'Resuming War'

LD1003233095 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Saharan President Mohamed Abdelaziz, who is on a working visit in Strasbourg, yesterday said: We hope that we will not resort to arms once again to defend our right to self-determination, and from this premise we reiterate our call for protecting peace in the Arab Maghreb. But, Mohamed Abdelaziz adds, if there is no solution other than resuming war, then the Saharan people have showed in the last years that they can further seek to exercise their rights through various forms of resistance and particularly struggle.

Kuwait

Oil Minister, Iranian Envoy Discuss Cooperation

LD1203212795 Tehran IRNA in English 2007 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Abu Dhabi (UAE), March 12, IRNA—Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Gholamali San'ati met with Kuwait's Oil Minister 'Abd-al-Muhsin al-Mid'aj in Kuwait last night.

In their meeting the two officials reviewed outlooks for cooperation and exchange of expertise in the oil industries, and also agreed that officials of the two countries would exchange visits with a view to finding out best possible technology in oil industries.

It is worth recalling that Iranian experts had capped several burning oil well in Kuwait in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war in 1991 set afire by retreating Iraqi troops.

Foreign Minister 'Pleased' With Iranian Ties

LD1303165195 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1451 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 13 Mar—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, today said that Kuwait and Iran are pleased with the progress in the development of the relations between them.

Shaykh Sabah expressed his pleasure at the extent of closeness between Kuwait and Tehran, and said: We are happy to have good relations with a neighbor like Iran, and we are hoping to consolidate relations to realize the interest of the Gulf region as a whole.

This came in the course of Shaykh Sabah's reply to a question by the KUNA on the future of Gulf-Iranian relations after his meeting with Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian Foreign Ministry undersecretary for Arab and North African affairs, who is currently visiting Kuwait within the framework of a tour of the region and which will also take him to Qatar.

Shaykh Sabah pointed out that he and Sheykholeslam discussed relations between the two countries and ways of developing and promoting them in all spheres.

There have been successive visits to Kuwait by Iranian officials recently, including by First Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammad Hashemi- Rafsanjani, which have led to the two sides stressing their desire to strengthen ties in all bilateral contacts. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Foreign Minister Receives Russia's Posuvalyuk

LD1403111795 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2350 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 13 Mar—His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the foreign minister, today received Viktor Posuvalyuk, deputy foreign minister of the Russian Federation. During their meeting they reviewed bilateral relations and some issues of mutual interest. [passage omitted]

The Russian official arrived in Jeddah yesterday. [passage omitted]

Opposition Reports Arrest of 'Ulema, Professors

NC1303200195 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 7 Mar 95 p 11

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement received by AL-NAHAR last night, the London-based committee for defense of legitimate rights in Saudi Arabia announced that the Saudi authorities have arrested another group of 'ulema and university professors who are senior figures in the reformist trend.

The committee said Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Bin-Sa'id al-Qahtani was arrested in Mecca and Shaykh Dr. Sa'id Bin-Za'ir was arrested in Riyadh and that orders have been issued for the arrest of Shaykh Dr. Nasir al-'Umar.

The committee added that the arrest campaign "coincided with further deterioration in the economic, social, civil, and political conditions in the country, with the allocation of more of the country's material and human resources for a small faction, and with the growing suffering of this nation's sons in terms of their livelihood and freedoms."

UN Security Council Decides To Maintain Sanctions

NC1303222895 Paris AFP in English 2220 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations, March 13 (AFP)—The UN Security Council decided Monday [13 March] to maintain international economic sanctions against Iraq imposed in 1990 when it invaded Iraq, the chairman of the council said.

The sanctions were automatically renewed because Baghdad had not yet fully complied with UN resolutions, said Li Zhaoxing of China.

The decision was a victory for the United States, which had campaigned in recent weeks for the sanctions against Iraq to be maintained despite pressure from Russia and France for them to be lifted.

Envoys' Remarks at UN Session Cited

JN1403133795 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1140 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 14 Mar (INA)—In a statement following the periodic review session on the blockade imposed on Iraq, which was held yesterday, China's representative at the United Nations, who is also president of the UN Security Council for this month, said that the Council members did not agree on a joint statement to lift the oil embargo.

Western diplomats said earlier that France and Russia would, as of next April, begin a campaign to lift the oil embargo imposed on Iraq.

Commenting on the UN Security Council session last night, a Western diplomat said that Monday's session was a formal meeting, and that the actual result and the truth would emerge in April when Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, submits his semiannual report on the 10th of next month.

Both Russia and France stressed that they would, together or separately, submit a draft resolution on lifting the oil embargo imposed on Iraq immediately after Ekeus submits a positive and final report to the UN Security Council.

The Iraqi News Agency has learned that French Ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimee said in his statement before the UN Security Council yesterday, after enumerating Iraq's achievements in implementing the UN Security Council resolutions, that all these elements appear to the French delegation as very promising elements, and indicate that Iraq really wants to contribute to regional peace and stability.

Ambassador Merimee said: Iraq is cooperating actively with the three-member committee, which is sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross, to resolve the problem of the missing Kuwaiti personnel. Ambassador Merimee called on the UN secretary general to expedite his efforts to settle the issue of property in accordance with the elements included in Iraq's recent responses. The French ambassador stressed that the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 specifically means lifting the oil embargo imposed on Iraq when Iraq fulfills its obligations regarding weapons of mass destruction. He said that Iraq is moving closer to this compliance.

The French ambassador added: Judging Iraq should not be based on accusations or speculations, but on facts documented by the UN Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The French ambassador said: An important historical event will begin in April. When the time comes, we will be ready to secure the necessary justifications so that the UN Security Council can draw its conclusions, providing Iraq has fulfilled its obligations which govern lifting the sanctions.

Russian Ambassador Sergey Lavrov told journalists that Iraq is very close to full compliance. He said that Russia is against the theory of "all or nothing."

He pointed out that Russia and the other states plan to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 immediately after the Security Council receives the UN Special Commission's report.

It is known that the UN Special Commission will submit its report on 10 April.

Ambassador Lavrov said that when Ambassador Ekeus submits his report, then it will be time to lift the oil embargo.

In statements to journalists following the Security Council meeting, French Ambassador Jean-Bernard Merimee said that he presented to the Council several positive elements implemented by Iraq, as well as some small shortcomings.

'Aziz Addresses Anti-Embargo Rally

JN1403125695 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Ambassador Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent UN representative, attended a speech rally in New York yesterday, Monday, to protest against the continued unjust economic siege against Iraq. The rally was organized by the center for international action headed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, with the participation of Margaret Papandreou, representative of the Women Organization for Joint Security, and other figures.

In a speech at the rally, Tariq 'Aziz voiced Iraq's appreciation for the efforts made by U.S. citizens who are hostile to the siege. He said that such efforts help to inform the U.S. people of the facts, and consequently, bring pressure to bear on the U.S. Administration to have it change its stand.

The deputy prime minister reviewed the history of Iraqi-U.S. relations. He said that Iraq has never had hostile feelings toward the American people. However, there were differences in viewpoints as a result of the U.S. Administration's limitless support for Israel. He added that through their own efforts, the Iraqis have managed in one year to bring Iraq from the pre-industrial era the U.S. aggression had brought about to the industrial era. He said that the Iraqis have rebuilt power plants, refineries, and telecommunications centers and all that was destroyed by the aggression bombs.

Tariq 'Aziz said that Iraq pursues development after it succeeded in wiping out the damage caused by the war, and the media hostile to Iraq cannot contest these facts.

Tariq 'Aziz pointed to the latest U.S. attack against Iraq, the attack against the General Intelligence Headquarters. He said: Not a single intelligence employee was harmed in the attack. However, the victim had been one of the most famous Iraqi painters. The missiles killed Layla al-'Attar, her husband, and her maid. [passage omitted]

'Aziz: Iraq Has Complied With UN Demands

NC1003220295 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1940 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 10 Mar (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has stated that Iraq's return to the world oil market will help stabilize both the market and the prices.

In remarks to journalists at the United Nations following his meeting this morning with the ambassadors of the nonaligned states that are members of the UN Security Council, 'Aziz explained that there are two OPEC states that are now members of the Security Council. He said that Indonesia and Nigeria are members of the Security Council and OPEC. Fortunately, they unequivocally support the lifting of the oil embargo against Iraq. Certainly, these two countries care about their national interests. He added that most OPEC states believe that Iraq's return to the oil market will help the stabilization of the market and will not make prices fall.

'Aziz indicated that most OPEC states, with the exception of two states that are benefiting directly from Iraq's absence as an oil exporter, [words indistinct] want and demand that Iraq return to the oil market because it is a stabilizing factor for the market and for prices.

'Aziz explained that during his current talks with the Security Council members he found an understanding for the human conditions [in Iraq] and for Iraq's achievements in implementing the Security Council resolutions. [Words indistinct] this is a positive and useful factor.

Asked about Western attempts to amend old Resolutions 706 and 712, 'Aziz said this new offer is like "old wine in new bottles," because the two resolutions issued in 1991 bear political objectives [word indistinct] and create problems more than they solve them. Their aim was to destabilize Iraq, and that is why Iraq rejected them from the beginning.

'Aziz asserted that Iraq currently enjoys the support of several Security Council members. He said that after four years of complying with the UN demands and after the main Iraqi achievements in implementing part C of Resolution 687, accepting the monitoring system in Resolution 715, and recognizing Kuwait and its borders, Iraq is entitled to demand that Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 be fully implemented. He explained that the implementation of Paragraph 22 will solve all the problems. We have the support of several Security Council members in this regard.

Asked about the claims that Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, who is accused of bombing the World Trade Center in New York, entered the United States with an Iraqi passport or is of Iraqi origin, 'Aziz said: I ask how could any Iraqi citizen get an entry visa to the United States so easily at a time when the Iraqi deputy prime minister, the Iraqi ambassador in Geneva, and other Iraqi officials are finding great difficulty in obtaining an entry visa to hold talks at the United Nations.

Ramadan: Albright Tour Shows 'Hostile U.S. Intentions'

JN1103091895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0818 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Mar (INA)—Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan has stressed that U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright's tour, which was designed to pressure the UN Security Council member states, has unambiguously revealed the hostile U.S. intentions against the Iraqi people.

In a statement to AL-JUMHURIYAH published today, the vice president said some states had been affected at previous stages by the U.S. deception, and that all states that are held in high regard, that respect their own and others' views, and that have diplomatic traditions have voiced their direct assessment of this trip.

Commenting on Albright's statements in which she announced that the United States will use the veto if it does not secure a majority to prevent the lifting of the blockade, Taha Yasin Ramadan asked: Is this a human approach that respects justice, legitimacy, and the resolutions of the UN Security Council, as America used to claim in the past?

On Iraqi diplomatic moves, the vice president said the conflict now is between right, represented by Iraq, and aggression, represented by America. He said the stage of disinformation and alleging that Iraq has failed to implement the so-called resolutions and paragraphs of the international legitimacy is now over.

He stressed that the world knows that Iraq has fulfilled all of its obligations despite their injustice and has done all that is required to bind the UN Security Council to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, and consequently to lift the comprehensive blockade imposed on Iraq.

Concluding his statement, the vice president said Iraqi diplomacy has taken important steps abroad to help develop a stand that supports Iraq's demand that the unjust blockade imposed on the Iraqi people be lifted.

AL-JUMHURIYAH Confident Sanctions To End Soon

JN1203103695 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0715 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH has stated that the arbitrary U.S. stand toward Iraq is no longer acceptable on the international, Western, or even U.S. scenes.

In an article today, the paper adds that the Iraq sanctions will not last long. They are on their way to being scrapped, particularly since Iraq has fulfilled the basic commitments imposed on it by the UN Security Council.

The paper goes on to say: The arbitrary U.S. policy will collapse in the face of the firm Iraqi willpower, and the will of the international community.

The paper points out that if the international consensus is any indication, we should expect a revocation of the sanctions in the near future. Likewise, we should expect to see Iraq recover its natural position and confirm its presence.

UN Envoy: Baghdad Prepared To Return Kuwait Property

JN1003170995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1620 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 10 Mar (INA)—Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, yesterday, Thursday, accused Iraq of insulting the intelligence of the UN Security Council when it claims that it possesses only very little of the Kuwaiti military hardware which was reportedly seized by Iraq in 1990. She said that a letter sent by Baghdad in reply to a list of equipment, which Kuwait submitted last month, was "an insult to the council and to everyone inside and outside it who has some intelligence."

Iraqi Envoy Nizar Hamdun has officially informed the United Nations that Iraq intends to return more than 2,000 pieces of military hardware confiscated by the Iraqi troops during their presence in Kuwait.

In a letter sent to Raymond Sommereyns, the UN coordinator in charge of restitution of Kuwaiti property, yesterday, Thursday, Iraqi UN Envoy Nizar Hamdun said that Baghdad is prepared to return the military hardware.

Paper Ridicules Albright Comment

JN1203102395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0730 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH has ridiculed the miserable attempt at blackmail made by Madeleine Albright, U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations, as manifested in the charges that Iraq has humiliated the UN Security Council [UNSC].

In an article today, the paper adds that these charges were made in the course of a comment Albright made on a letter Iraq has sent to the UNSC regarding a list of military equipment Kuwait submitted to the UNSC last month. This miserable attempt by the United States, the paper notes, came only two days ahead of the UNSC's review of the unfair sanctions clamped on Iraq.

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: The fig leaf Albright returned with from her tour of several UNSC members' capitals was too small to cover the U.S. hostility toward Iraq and the U.S. stand, which demands the perpetuation of the unfair sanctions, which are no longer justifiable on legal or moral grounds.

The paper says: Given the weakness and imprudence of the U.S. argument, because it has no supporters; and due to the fact that the number of countries that support Iraq as well as an end to the unfair Iraq sanctions is on the increase, particularly within the UNSC, the argument promoted by the U.S. delegate to the United Nations could not have been more miserable or bankrupt. Madeleine Albright raised this issue crudely and flagrantly; and this will cause her to lose.

The paper adds: Iraq has sent a letter to the UN coordinator assigned the task of returning Kuwaiti property to Kuwait, announcing its willingness to return the Kuwaiti military equipment alleged to have been seized in 1990. In a nutshell, this is all there is to the issue. Where then is the humiliation of the UNSC discovered by the extremely smart U.S. delegate to the exclusion of all other members of the UNSC?

AL-THAWRAH goes on to say: We are confronted by a huge deluge of observations and evidence regarding the hostile U.S. policy, which prompts Washington and its propaganda trumpets to make unsubstantiated charges against Iraq with a view to deceiving and misleading the world public and creating the greatest possible confusion and chaos on the international scene. Washington has produced a plethora of blatant lies and charges against Iraq—lies and charges that are a figment of the sick imperialist-Zionist imagination.

AL-THAWRAH concludes its article by saying: The world is fed up with the U.S. lies. The UNSC is also fed up with them, and with the overall U.S. heresies against Iraq. Moreover, a large number of UNSC members support Iraq, as well as an end to the unfair Iraq sanctions, particularly since it has met the requirements of the United Nations. Therefore, Iraq now has the inalienable right to see the UNSC fulfill its commitments as enshrined in Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687. This is necessary if the UNSC is to safeguard its credibility and perceived ability to shoulder its historical, humanitarian, and moral responsibilities.

Saddam Said Target of New 'Grand Plan' To Oust Him

TA1403113995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 14 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Alon Pinkas]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Recent violent clashes between the Iraqi army and Kurdish rebels in the north and Shiite groups in the south of Iraq suggest a "grand plan" by opposition groups to topple Saddam Husayn's regime and are likely to intensify, a senior Israeli official monitoring Iraq said.

The official said that both Israeli and US intelligence are closely monitoring events in Iraq which, according to estimates in both countries, are likely to accelerate if UN-imposed economic sanctions remain in effect.

The UN Security Council is scheduled to convene next Monday to review the sanctions imposed following the Gulf War in 1991. The official said that Saddam is refraining from using excessive force against the rebellious groups in an effort to convince the UN that Iraq is complying with the sanctions.

"If the sanctions, which have already caused severe economic hardship in Iraq, are not eased, it is probable that the concerted effort, which we see as a grand plan to topple the regime, will intensify, but will also encourage an equally swift and forceful reaction from Saddam," the official said.

He added that internal strife between rival Kurdish groups threatens the opposition effort, but that there are strong indications of organized opposition to Saddam's regime in the predominantly Shiite south.

An Iraqi newspaper, Babil, published by Saddam Husayn's eldest son 'Udayy, said yesterday that the army had thwarted "an attempted intrigue" by the Kurds "aimed at showing Iraq to be an unstable country" so that the crippling UN embargo will not be lifted, as Baghdad wants.

The newspaper, in a front-page editorial, gave no details on when the clashes occurred.

'Skirmishes' Reportedly Continue in North

PUK Claims Brigade Commander Killed

MM1303151395 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 13 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Talabani Party Confirms Killing of Iraqi Brigade Commander, Deployment of Republican Guard]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH—A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK]) (led by Jalal Talabani) in London has confirmed that Iraqi opposition forces "launched an attack on Iraqi Army deployments on the Debecka axis southwest of Irbil." He added that "the attack resulted in the killing of Lieutenant Colonel Khayun Muhsin, commander of Brigade 847 belonging to the 5th Division. It also resulted in the seizure of the positions of two tank and artillery battalions."

The spokesman added that 270 officers and soldiers were captured in the attack, pointing to the presence of Republican Guard deployments near Kifri in northern Iraq with the aim of storming it.

The spokesman said that "the national forces seized weapons, artillery pieces, and 28 tanks and armored vehicles".

Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] sources have said that "skirmishes between national forces and the Army continued on Saturday in al-Sulaymaniyah, even though they were less severe."

Baghdad denied mobilizing forces toward the northern areas controlled by the Kurds. It also denied the occurrence of clashes. However, it did announce "the repulsion of an encroachment" by forces belonging to Talabani's party on military positions situated on the contact line parallel with Parallel 36.

The UINC and the PUK adhere to their information about the "fighting." The congress paraded military prisoners in northern Iraq two days ago. The Iraqi Communist Party too confirmed its participation in the confrontations alongside the "national forces."

Meanwhile, a high-ranking UINC source has said that Staff Major general Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, who visited Damascus a few days ago "reviewed before Syrian leaderships field realities relating to the confrontation" in northern Iraq.

Army Said Bombarding Irbil Villages

NC1303160295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1511 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi regime's aggressor forces bombarded several villages in Irbil Governorate last night, using helicopter gunships and heavy artillery. The brutal 'Aflaqite shelling of Qashqah, Khurkhur, Sartik, Aw Mal, (Amdun), (Masikha), Kalarash, Dushwan, and (Tarta) forced hundreds of Kurdish families to leave their homes.

The artillery of the criminal Saddamist regime also bombarded the Chamchamal District from emplacements in the (Bani Maqam) hills in the evening hours yesterday. This brutal bombardment damaged many houses.

A reliable source reported that a so-called commando unit of the bloody 'Aflaqite regime raided Jibarah in Kifri District and arrested many civilians in a barbaric and arbitrary manner. The unit members threatened to demolish the entire district.

Kurdish Forces Attack Regime Post in North

NC1303175495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tyrant Saddam's regime is continuing its attacks on areas in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The regime artillery shelled Shaykh Sulayman Village on the (Guyar) Axis. Kurdish sources in the north said Kurdish forces retaliated for the regime's aggression by launching a surprise attack on the headquarters of a company belonging to the 38th Division's 72d Regiment of the Saddam regime forces. They killed seven of the regime personnel and captured another soldier while the rest fled their position.

The sources added that the Kurdish forces captured two medium-caliber (BKC) machine guns, four RPG [word indistinct], 12 light Kalashnikov rifles, and other military equipment.

PUK Claims Capture of 120 Soldiers

LD1303221595 Tehran IRNA in English 2132 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nowsud (Kordestan Prov.), March 14, IRNA—Some 120 Iraqi military forces were taken prisoner around Irbil, northern Iraq, by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) during the recent clashes. The al-Sulaymaniyah television announced on Monday [13 March] that during the attack, in which armed forces of Workers Party of Iraqi Kurdistan participated, numerous government forces were killed or wounded.

During the clashes between the Kurdish forces and the Iraqi Army, several artillery pieces, 10 armoured vehicles and a large amount of ammunitions were taken as booties. Al-Sulaymaniyah TV added in its report PUK leader Jalal Talabani had asked the Iraqi forces to leave the Irbil region and surrender.

Opposition Appeals to Tribes To Stand Against Saddam

NC1003195595 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1545 GMT 10 Mar 95

[Appeal addressed to Arab tribes in the Karkuk and Mosul Governorates; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] O brother sons of the tribes of al-'Ubayd, Shammar, al-Jubur, and other Arab clans in Mosul and Karkuk: You are more aware than others of Saddam Husayn regime's bestial practices against the Iraqi people. You are aware that Saddam has trampled on all noble values and traditions and the traits of manhood in which the Iraqi tribes have been raised. You were reared cherishing the traits of magnanimity, manhood, and generosity. The current stage our Iraqi people are passing through is rife with starvation and disease, which are is afflicting old people, women, and children. Saddam Husayn has turned the Iraqi people into hostages for lifting the blockade on his regime. The economic and political crises are (?undermining) the regime and bringing it closer to its inevitable end. The wrath of the masses against the regime is growing day by day.

At these delicate and fateful circumstances of the history of our Iraqi people, our brothers of the al-'Ubayd, Shammar, and al-Jubur tribes and clans who are living in the governorates of Karkuk and Mosul, you are required to close your ranks and unify your stand to support the masses of Kurdistan and Iraq. You are required to dissociate your fate from that of the dictatorial regime's, which may collapse at any moment. Be a strong support for the Iraqi masses who are bracing to pounce on the dens of the bloody regime in Baghdad.

You have a noted history of sacrifices and good deeds in defense of the Iraqi people and their national causes. O our ardent brothers: The angry Iraqi masses have resolved to break the fetters of persecution by confronting the dictatorial regime and bringing closer the day of salvation. The dictatorship is in the throes of death and all that is needed is firing the last bullet. Support your brothers in Kurdistan, in central and southern Iraq to end Saddam Husayn's regime. The day of salvation is very close and the sun of freedom will rise in Iraq shortly and the dictatorship will be eliminated. The Arab-Kurdish, Torkuman, and Assiriac brotherhood will remain stronger than the intrigues of dictatorship and its adventures.

Opposition Council Meets in Ordinary Session

JN1303182495 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Presidential Council of the Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] held an ordinary session at Salah-al-Din today, Monday 13 March. All members of the Presidential Council—Staff Field Marshal Hasan al-Naqib, Muhammad Bahr-al- 'Ulum, and Mas'ud Barzani—attended.

The conferees discussed topical issues concerning the UINC, as well as solutions to the situation in Kurdistan. They also discussed the UINC conditions, the convening of an UINC Executive Council meeting, and strengthening ties and dialogue with the opposition parties that are not member of the UINC.

The conferees also stressed the need to make appropriate plans and pool efforts to topple the dictatorship and establish a federal, democratic parliamentary alternative.

Opposition Sources Say Baghdad in 'Turmoil'

NC1303174995 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources claim that Baghdad has experienced a deteriorating security situation in the last two days as Saddam's regime deployed units of the Republican Guards supported by tanks in a number of prominent places to intimidate the citizens.

The sources said turmoil prevails in the capital, Baghdad, following the recent coup attempt against Iraq's tyrant. The sources added that Republican Guard units and armed security forces were deployed around vital installations in Baghdad, such as the radio and television building, the Defense and Interior Ministries, and several major banks.

Regime Reportedly Masses Troops, Equipment in South

NC1303163395 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources in southern Iraq have monitored huge concentrations of tyrant Saddam's forces consisting of armored vehicles, heavy artillery, and special forces heading toward areas adjacent to the southern marshlands.

The sources said the size of some of these troop deployments is unprecedented since the war tyrant Saddam waged against the Islamic Republic. The troops took up fortified positions on the second rampart in al-'Amarah Governorate far from the border with the Islamic Republic.

The sources said that there was continuous heavy artillery fire against many areas in the marshlands, namely in Hawr (Um al-Ni'aj) and other areas extending as far as (al-Sirdahiyah) in al-'Uzayr District and al-Karradah in al-Madinah District, al-Basrah Governorate. Our sources warned that the information available indicates that tyrant Saddam's forces are making preparations for some kind of military action against the southern marshlands.

Our sources inside Iraq have confirmed that in the past few days the security authorities of tyrant Saddam's regime launched a sweeping campaign to arrest citizens in the Governorates of al-Basrah, al-Nasiriyah, al-'Amarah, and al-Samawah in southern Iraq. The sources added that the arrests were directed at university and institute students, a large number of officers—including senior officers—office workers, merchants, and professionals.

Our sources said the security situation in these governorates is paralyzed and that the regime's security forces are roaming the streets provoking and harassing citizens. Our sources added that groups of youths carried out antiregime activities targeting centers and headquarters of the security authorities and the ruling party, killing several members of the regime and its criminal gang members.

Security Said Heightened in al-Najaf, Karbala'

NC1303171395 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Since the beginning of this month, tyrant Saddam's regime has implemented a state of emergency among its oppressive security agencies in the holy cities of al-Najaf and Karbala' in anticipation of a new uprising like that of 15 Sha'ban 1991.

Reporting this, Iraqi opposition sources said the regime's oppressive agencies have deployed personnel along public roads and in residential areas to monitor the tense situation. They also inspect citizens and cars on some of these roads and arrest many youths on the pretext of not carrying the required documents.

Baghdad Hosts Two-Day Oil, Gas Conference

OPEC Official Expects 'Great Success'

JN1103103295 Baghdad INA in English 0934 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 11, INA—Assistant Secretary General of the OPEC Dr Ramzi Salman has described the symposium on future of oil and gas markets, due in Baghdad today, as an oil scientific demonstration expressing Iraq's status and its influential role in the world oil market.

In a statement to INA, Dr Salman said that it was no strange to hold such symposium in Iraq who witnessed in 1960 the foundation of the OPEC and who is now possessing the second largest oil reserve in the world and competent oil technical cadres.

He expects great success to this symposium that has been devoted great attention by oil circles for it will pave the way for participants to exchange viewpoints that reflect expectancies of world oil companies and organizations like OPEC of future of oil and gas markets in the world.

The symposium discusses over two days 12 specialized research papers and studies tackling the influential factors in the oil markets pending the year 2010.

Oil Minister Gives Opening Address

JN1103145395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Mar (INA)—A symposium on the Future of Oil and Gas Markets Between 2000 and 2010 opened in Baghdad today in the presence of more than 250 Arab and foreign oil experts representing 25 countries.

Oil Minister Safa' Hadi Jawad gave the opening address in which he stated that the oil industry will continue to constitute a basic factor in defining our mode of life and future development and that the future of the oil market and the way it is run will continue to be of great importance to our country and to the prosperity of our people, now and in the future.

The minister said that oil will continue to be an important factor in the economics of all countries and peoples and will continue to affect the nature of the political relations among them. He added: We hope that this symposium will result in greater understanding of the future development of some of these issues and that the distinguished speakers who responded to the invitations of the symposium's organizers will certainly be able to shed some light on the important issues the oil industry is currently facing and those it will face in the next decade. He noted that the speakers' wide and multifaceted experience and the presence of analysts from oil companies, international organizations, bankers, and expert journalists will certainly constitute an important factor in reaching wise and successful conclusions.

The minister said that the expected increase in oil consumption will step up the demand for OPEC oil. As a result, there will be an increase in the demand for the oil of certain OPEC countries. He said that Iraq is confident that this will allow it to increase its oil production to maintain the balance on the oil market, which is an objective all parties seek to achieve.

The minister said that Iraq believes that no obstacles should stand in the way of having its huge oil reserves contribute to the progress of its traditional oil customers and to the welfare of its own citizens.

Dr. Safa' Hadi Jawad said that the heavy damage inflicted on our oil industry and the perpetuation of the embargo will not prevent Iraq and its people from looking to the future with confidence, hope, and enthusiasm. He referred to the huge efforts that have been exerted within the framework of the reconstruction campaign and the plans to restore the oil industry to its pre-aggression status.

He said that Iraq has begun implementing plans to increase oil production to levels that are in line with the huge oil resources it possesses on one hand, and with its concept as to how the future of the oil market should be on the other, in a manner that will avoid any waste.

The oil minister said that it has become obvious that there is international pressure to lift the embargo imposed on Iraq and end its people's tribulation. He called on the UN Security Council to assume its responsibilities, particularly after Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations under the UN resolutions.

The oil minister said that those who call for the perpetuation of the embargo have used all possible excuses and justifications and their current stand clearly harms the authority the international community has entrusted them with. He said that the policy of embargoes, whether the one imposed on Iraq or those on other countries, has become a means to control the supply on the oil market, an accusation mistakenly leveled at all the oil producers at one time.

The oil minister said that as soon as the embargo is lifted, Iraq will enter the oil market in a responsible way, which was a characteristic of its oil policies over a period of two decades before the embargo, and will seek to strengthen and maintain balance in the oil market in cooperation with its OPEC partners and other producers. He also stressed that Iraq's return to the oil market must not be viewed as a threat to anybody. He urged Iraq's partners in OPEC and other producers outside OPEC to prepare for Iraq's return to the market if they wish to achieve the desired stability.

He said that the Iraqi oil policy, as stated on several occasions by President Saddam Husayn, will continue to seek to obtain fair prices for oil and suitable revenue, which can be used in investment and to guarantee the necessary resources for social and economic development. The policy will also aim at realizing cooperation between the producers and consumers to spare the oil market any crises.

He stressed that the preservation of our oil resources and the endeavor to obtain the best technology available will be two main pillars in our policy. Once it returns to the oil market, he said, Iraq will seek to rebuild its status in its traditional markets and will strive to renew its relations with its customers in the consumer countries without exception.

Dr. Safa' Hadi Jawad added that Iraq is prepared to listen and to interact positively with new ideas as a partner seeking to achieve mutual and lasting benefits. He noted the current negotiations with oil companies from several countries in the world, which, it is hoped, will yield successful and fruitful results. He said: Nevertheless, we will continue to study each case on its own merits and take into account the best ways to develop our various fields.

Following the speech, the first session of the symposium opened with Sa'dallah al-Futayhi, chairman of the preparatory committee, as the chair. The session discussed three research papers. The first on the factors influencing the oil markets in 2010 by Dr. Ramzi Salman, OPEC assistant secretary general; the second, on the structure of the international oil industry by Margery [name as transliterated], vice president of the French Total group; and the third on the new trends in oil costs—a comparison between OPEC states and other countries by Dr. Thomas Staffer [name as transliterated], a consultant from the United States.

Further on Jawad's Remarks

JN1103155295 Baghdad INA in English 1030 GMT 11 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 11 (INA)—Iraq is one of the world oldest and biggest oil producing and exporting countries. The weight of its oil industry in the economy is indeed very important.

In opening speech in the seminar on the Future of Oil and Gas Markets 2000-2010, opened today in Baghdad, [Iraqi Oil Minister] Dr. Jawad added notwithstanding the current difficulties and our absence from the oil market for the last five years and the state policy to diversify our economy, the oil industry will continue to be prominent in our development for the foreseeable future. Therefore, even at a time when we are out of the international market, the future of this market and the way it is likely to evolve remains of great concern to our country now and in the future.

The minister elaborated that since the early 80's, the oil producing countries suffered greatly, not only because their oil revenues had declined to dangerous levels with dire consequences on their economies, but also because of the uncertainties that have reigned over their future development. And in spite of the prevailing trend of low oil prices, it is still difficult to ascertain the development of the market main parameters. How will oil demand evolve and how will this interact with supplies? Is the production capacity around the world sufficient to meet future requirement? Will the investment funds be available to meet the expected challenge? Above all are we approaching the future with spirit of cooperation among all market participants or are we going to remain victims of intense competition and narrow self interests?

He further said whichever way these issues are looked at by consumers or producers it is clear that oil will continue to be a major factor in each country economic prosperity, the wellbeing of its people and its political relations.

The minister pointed out that in the proceedings of this seminar, a common understanding will, hopefully, be arrived at as to the likelihood of future developments of some of these issues. The prominent speakers that the organizers have been able to call upon are most certainly capable to shed the lights on these issues that the oil industry is facing now or expected to face in the coming decade. The wide and varied experience of the distinguished speakers, and, for that matter, the whole audience whether they are analysts, oil companies, international organizations, bankers and specialized press will certainly be the best bet for a successful and wise conclusion.

Dr. Jawad confirmed the rise in the demand for oil in the future will be translated in more demand for OPEC oil and consequently more oil from certain members of the organization. We in Iraq, are confident that our country will be called. Sure you will all share with, is that the enormous damage inflicted on our industry and the continuation of the embargo will not deter Iraq and its people from looking to the future with confidence, hope and enthusiasm [sentence as received]. This has been amply demonstrated by the great effort deployed in the reconstruction campaign and the plans to restore the oil industry to its pre-aggression vitality, in addition to expanding production capacity to levels proportionate to our resource base on one hand and our view of the oil market on the other. We do, however, recognize the uncertainties of the oil market and our expansion must be constantly monitored and checked to avoid any misallocation of our resources.

The minister said in this connection, it is believed that oil should not continue to be the provider of most of the country wealth and that other sectors should be encouraged. With this in mind and considering that the Iraqi economy has suffered a great deal from aggression and embargo for the last 15 years, then plans must be implemented to raise oil production in order to compensate for the shortage of consumer goods and services most urgently by the population and provide funds for investment.

Recently, the international pressure has become very noticeable, in order to lift the embargo on Iraq and put an end to the suffering of its people. The U.N. Security Council must live up to its responsibilities especially that Iraq has met its obligations under the U.N. resolutions. Those who still advocate the continuation of the embargo are running out of excuses and they stand to be seen as abusing the power entrusted to them by the international community. In this connection, please allow me to say that "embargo" whether on Iraq or others have become a policy instrument to manipulate supplies in the market, something which the producers have often been wrongly accused of. The arrogance of such policies are also harmful to the long-term interests of its own advocates as they rely more and more on oil imports particularly from our own region. Such policies will also lead to some political surprises and instability in the oil producing regions.

Once the embargo is lifted, Iraq shall approach the oil market with the responsibility that has been a corner in our policy for about two decades. Iraq shall seek cooperation to strengthen and stabilize the oil market together with our partners in OPEC and other producers as well. Our return to the market should not be seen as a threat to anyone. On the contrary, our absence has not improved the outlook to anyone.

Therefore, the duty of our partners in OPEC and also producers outside OPEC is to prepare for Iraq's return to the market if they desire the stability that must be sought by all of us. This must be done in a very clear and responsible manner to give the right signal to the market and to avoid the often expected deterioration of oil prices and their subsequent negative impact on all of us. Iraq's oil policy as often advocated by his excellency president Saddam Husayn shall continue to seek fair prices, fair return on investment, devoting revenues to development, cooperation between producers and consumers and the avoidance of crisis in the oil market. Conservation of our resources continues to be on our mind and we shall seek the best technology to achieve it.

The minister elaborated that the industry will be given all the support necessary for implementing its programmes and modernization plans. It will also be provided with the resources to revitalize our facilities and to bring new fields on stream. In all this we need the support, partnership and understanding of the international oil industry. While we remain proud of our achievements since the early 70's when we took control of our oil industry, we are ready and willing to interact with any fresh and positive idea as equal partners seeking to achieve mutual and lasting benefits. Most of you are aware of the ongoing negotiation and discussions with oil companies from many countries. Iraq hopes to bring these efforts to a successful and fruitful conclusions.

The minister added at this point we would like to stress upon the initiatives taken by President Saddam Husayn in warning against the danger of the sharp increases in oil prices in 1973 and 1979 and the negative consequences on oil exporting countries and on the world as a whole in the long term. Developments since then have, actually, proved the wisdom and the objectivity of this position.

The minister said that Iraq possesses at least 112 billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves and 214 billion barrels of probable and possible crude oil reserves, in addition to 160 tcf [trillion cubic feet] of free gas.

The volume of work that is planned to be undertaken requires large investment in the order of 25 billion dollar to be spent over the next 5-8 years on the up-stream sector in order to regain capacity and accelerate production rates. This includes fields development and investment in storage, transportation and export facilities, but excludes the cost of utilizing associated and free gas for consumption in the local industry and for export. The development of the downstream sector and gas processing requires further investment which exceeds 5 billion dollars, the minister concluded.

Arab, European, Asian Experts Attend

NC1103180095 Paris AFP in English 1616 GMT 11 Mar 95

[By Erwan Jourand]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 11 (AFP)—Iraq on Saturday [11 March] called for potential investors to put up 25 billion dollars to help its oil industry hit by nearly five years of UN sanctions at an international conference here.

Iraqi authorities have succeeded in attracting around 250 Arab, European and Asian experts as well as international oil firms to its two-day oil and gas conference in Baghdad in spite of the oil and trade embargo. American companies however have stayed away from the conference, the first of its kind to be hosted by Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War.

"In the next five to eight years we envisage investments of around 25 billion dollars for extraction and development projects in 30 oilfields with a production capacity of 4.5 million barrels per day (bpd)," Oil Minister Safa' Hadi Jawad told participants.

Jawad said Iraq had held "serious" discussions with international gas and oil companies aimed at striking deals on the development of new oilfields such as Majnun and Nahr Omar.

The conference opened two days before Monday's UN Security Council review of the sanctions imposed on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhmmad Sa'id al-Sahhaf visited Qatar Saturday to lobby for support in getting the crippling embargo ended. It was the first visit by such a senior Iraqi official to a Gulf Arab state since the Gulf War.

Jawad also sought to calm fears over Iraq's return to the oil market once the UN Security Council decides to lift sanctions.

"Iraq's return to the oil market should not be seen as a threat to anyone. It will be a means of stabilising the market," Jawad said.

According to the specialist weekly the MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC SURVEY (MEES), Iraq has been negotiating contracts with about 20 oil companies keen to cash in once the UN embargo is lifted.

Several foreign companies attending the conference here said they had held preliminary talks with Iraq on exploiting new oil and gas fields but had not violated sanctions by concluding deals.

Pierre Weuleresse, an executive of the French company Gaz de France, told AFP that his company had been holding talks with Iraq since 1994.

"Iraq has very large gas reserves. They are at a preliminary stage in developing this resource and Gaz de France, which is the second largest gas company in the world, can help them on the local or export markets," Weuleresse said.

Christophe de Margerie, executive vice president of French oil company Total, said talks were taking place with Iraq to begin working relations as soon as possible.

Total was planning more than a billion dollars in investment but was not "working on a project because that is not allowed" under UN sanctions, he added.

Iraq has the second largest proven crude oil reserves in the world at 112 billion barrels. Its gas reserves are estimated at 7,500 billion cubic metres (262,500 billion cubic feet). Iraq's policy, Jawad said, is to "use our enormous reserves of hydrocarbons to increase production capacity."

Baghdad would be able to export some two million bpd of crude once sanctions were lifted, and could reach its pre-war production capacity of 3.2 million bpd within 15 months, he said. He also called on the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to raise Iraq's previous quota of 3.14 million bpd to 3.6 million bpd.

"We need aid, understanding and support from governments, international firms and investors so that Iraq can regain its place on the international market and in OPEC," he said. OPEC has rolled over its 1994 production ceiling for this year amid an oil glut and low crude prices.

Meanwhile, OPEC deputy secretary general Ramzi Salman told the conference Saturday that the 12-nation cartel may change its structure and cut back its role to one of coordination rather than fixing quotas.

Foreign Experts on Future Cooperation

JN1303111995 Baghdad INA in English 0950 GMT 13 Mar 95

[All names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 13, INA—The future of oil and gas market seminar discussed on Sunday [12 March] oil prices to the year 2000 with more than 250 oil experts from various Arab and foreign countries attending the seminar.

The first speaker of Sunday's session was Dr. Nicola Sarkis from the Paris-based Arab Petroleum Research Center (APRC). His research paper is entitled: Oil Prices to the Year 2000, the Option for Producing Countries.

Sunday morning session included a research paper on oil demand and supply availability and countries policies by Phillippe Rogier, director of foreign affairs of the French firm IFP.

Editor of the Middle East Economic Survey, Ian Seymour addressed the seminar. He delivered a research paper on oil market and price prospects and the role of the specialized media.

THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER had interviewed some of the Sunday's session.

Representative of the Finnish firm Neste Oy Bo Lindfors said that before the war in 1991 his company used to purchase Iraqi oil for many years.

He said that he is here to find out the changes concerning Iraqi oil industry. Iraq has big oil reserve, so it has to come back to the oil market.

Pierre Weulierssee from Gas de France said that his company has started discussions with Iraqi officials a month ago. The company is mainly specialized in production of gas, transportation of gas and distribution.

Iraq has large resources heritage oil and gas ltd [sentence as received].

Chief executive officer of the company Anthony Buckingham told THE BAGHDAD OBSERVER that when the sanctions are eased the company wants to operate in Iraq. The company is specialized on gas exploration and development.

He said that his company is currently holding discussions with Iraq on future deals. UK had been very sure of gas in north and south of the country, he said adding that there are three fields in Iraq which are pure gas fields. Weulevsee said his company is interested in these three fields.

There are many British companies represented in the seminar. Among these companies is good trade partner of Iraq before the war.

Mean's [as received] point of view: We do not want to be left behind. We have to take advantage of the situation.

He said Iraq is an important oil producer, therefore, it is very difficult to keep Iraq out of the oil market for long.

I think the international opinion, generally speaking, is going to allow Iraq back to the oil market, he said.

Incentives Offered to Oil Firms

LD1303182995 Tehran IRNA in English 1812 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Mar. 13, IRNA—Multinational oil firms were reported to have entered the equation in the latest attempt by the Iraqi regime to have UN sanctions lifted. Executives from 29 countries were said to have been offered incentives to develop Iraqi oilfields in a policy shift that will open up the country's energy reserves to foreign companies on the largest scale yet in the Middle East.

Iraqi officials at a weekend oil conference in Baghdad reportedly told the international gathering that Saddam Husayn's regime was now willing to allow dlrs 25 billion worth of western investment in some of the world's biggest fields. The incentive is seen as part of Baghdad's latest campaign to relax the five-year old embargo, following a series of western trade delegations visiting the capital.

The intense lobbying comes as the Security Council is under growing pressure from France and Russia to repackage the sanctions in such a way that will allow Iraq to trade internationally.

British and American oil majors were noted for their absence from the conference, but commentators here suggesting that it may be just a matter of time before they join ELF and TOTAL of France and Russia's Luk Oil in negotiating deals once cracks appear in the embargo.

INA Cites CNN Report on Oil Seminar

JN1203111095 Baghdad INA in English 0945 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 12, INA—The U.S. C.N.N. reported that Iraq's possession of the second largest oil reserve in the world would be a factor to force the Security Council to reconsider its attitude towards Iraq and lift the sanctions clamped on its people over four years now.

The C.N.N. correspondent, who is in Baghdad to make TV coverage of the Baghdad oil and gas conference, said that tens of experts and businessmen representing different states are attending the conference, referring that it is of great importance because of time of its holding that coincides with the routine review of the anti-Iraq sanctions by the Security Council, due on Monday.

The correspondent further said that Western oil businessmen deemed the conference as an important opportunity to conduct contacts with the Iraqi side and to meet each other to consider the world oil future after the sanctions are lifted and to discuss striking investment oil deals with Iraq.

Experts Urge 'Quick End' to Blockade

JN1203173595 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1348 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—Several experts and specialists taking part in an international symposium on the future of oil and gas from 2000-2010 have said Iraq's expected return to the oil market will bolster and balance this market.

In statements to the Iraqi News Agency, they said that such a return will achieve a balance in oil prices and ensure the rights of oil-producing countries without harming consumer countries.

They pointed out that the blockade has not just harmed Iraq's people, but also brought huge losses to countries and companies dealing with Iraq.

They expressed the hope for a quick end to the suffering of the Iraqi people so Iraq can resume its leading role on both the regional and international levels.

Arab oil expert Dr. Nicola Sarkis, director of the Arab Oil Research Center in France, said the blockade imposed on Iraq not only affects oil exports, but also all walks of life. This, he said, has caused a severe shortage of food, medicine, and drugs and caused the suffering of the Iraqi people. He described the blockade as an unprecedented incident in history. He said the blockade is continuing as a result of the obstinacy and intransigence the United States is exercising in coordination with Britain and the Zionist entity in international circles. [passage omitted]

Conference Concludes

JN1203192995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1755 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 12 Mar (INA)—The Seminar on the Future of Oil and Gas Markets 2000-2010 concluded its work this evening. At the final session of the seminar, three scientific, specialized research papers by experts from Iraq, France, and Cyprus were discussed.

The research papers of the fourth session, which was chaired by Dr. Falih al-Kubaysi, an expert at the Iraqi Oil Ministry, dealt with the Iraqi oil industry, the current circumstances and future expectations, relations between oil companies and producing nations, the structure of the oil and gas markets 2000-2010, and the dynamics of world supply and demand.

A speech representing participants in the seminar was delivered. The speech praised the efforts to hold this oil conference, with such a large number of participants, something that reflects the importance of Iraq on regional and international levels and its effective role in the oil market.

Some 250 experts and specialists in the fields of oil, the economy, and information from 25 Arab and foreign countries took part in the seminar. In their two-day seminar, they discussed, in four sessions, 12 scientific and technical research papers on the factors affecting the oil markets for 2000-2010, the structure of the world oil industry, new oil cost comparisons between OPEC and non-OPEC producers, expectations for long-term supply and demand, world investment in oil and gas industries and their effect on supply, the effect of taxation systems on oil and extraction investments, oil prices in the year 2000, the options of producing nations, demand for oil, nations' policies and the challenges to oil industry, and independent research centers, the oil media, and the market.

AL-THAWRAH on Importance of Oil Seminar

JN1303110595 Baghdad INA in English 0920 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 13, INA—An Iraqi paper has said the anti-Iraq embargo does not scale down Iraq's influence in its regional and international sphere despite all wicked attempts and anomalous policies.

AL-THAWRAH daily, organ of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, said in its today article that the fact that dominated world vision as for Iraq was not only as being the cradle of civilization, but the center of future weight and the land that stores world fuel when it would be depleted in other places.

The oil and gas seminar concluded on Sunday in Baghdad was one of the images of expression for this fact, and also to admit Iraq's importance who possesses the second largest oil reserve in the world, and it, as well, was an acknowledgement of its pioneering role in stabilizing oil market during the 1970's and 1980's and its decisive effect in the oil market after the sanctions are lifted.

Russian Energy Minister Reportedly To Visit

JN1203173995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Raghidah Durgham in New York and AL-HAYAH London and Moscow bureaus]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] It was officially announced yesterday that Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf arrived last night in Doha on a two-day visit to Qatar. He was received at Doha International Airport by Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani and Anwar Sabri 'Abd-al- Raziq, Iraq's ambassador to Qatar.

Qatar sent a private jet to Amman to take al-Sahhaf to Doha on the first visit by an Iraqi minister to a Gulf Cooperation Council member state since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the summer of 1990. Al-Sahhaf is also expected to visit Oman.

In Moscow, AL-HAYAH has learned that Yuriy Shafranik, Russia's minister for energy and fuel, will visit Iraq next week to discuss oil cooperation between the two countries.

In press statements yesterday, Shafranik stressed that Moscow confirms its commitment to cooperation with Baghdad "to the extent that agrees" with Russian interests.

The Russian oil news agency noted that oil cooperation projects between Russia and Iraq are estimated to value $1.5 billion. It stressed that Moscow studies ideas to finance these projects provided that Baghdad repays the debts after the lifting of the international sanctions. [passage omitted]

Communications Minister, Delegation Leave for Paris

NC1303195595 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1920 GMT 13 Mar 93

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 13 mar (INA)—Dr. Ahmad Murtada, minister of transport and telecommunications, has left Baghdad for Paris at the head of a delegation including a number of the ministry officials. The visit is in response to an invitation from the French minister of industry, communications, and foreign trade to discuss bilateral relations in the field of transport and communications.

Rabin: Christopher Visit 'Test' of U.S. Ability

TA1303150495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin says that he views the U.S. secretary of state's visit as a test of the U.S. ability to bring about the resumption of the talks with Syria. The prime minister made these remarks in a conversation with reporters following the annual commemoration service for the fatalities of Tel Hay. He added that Christopher's very activities embody the hope for the resumption of talks, and he hoped the other side was equally interested in peace.

Our correspondent Nati Zilberman notes that the prime minister stressed that he will learn how successful Christopher has been tonight or tomorrow.

Rabin Says No Change in Israeli, Syrian Positions

TA1403122395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin stated in a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today that there has been no change in the positions of Israel and Syria, our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports. Mr. Rabin noted that so far there has been no substantial concession in Israel's position. Nevertheless, he added the word almost and said: There has been almost no substantial concession.

At the beginning of the session the prime minister stated that according to reports from Arab sources there are many in the Likud who support a withdrawal on the Golan but that this has yet to be confirmed. Mr. Rabin's remarks triggered furious heckling from Likud members.

Peres Says 'Unpopular' Decision on Golan Needed

TA1303113895

[FBIS Editorial Report] Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 13 March carries an ITIM report on page A1 saying: "Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres said yesterday that 'we have to make an unpopular decision' regarding an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, if and when an agreement is made with Syria. Peres said that Israel will walk the Syrian track 'step by step' as it had done in the past with the Palestinians and the Jordanians.

"According to Peres 'in our times, defense cannot be performed along borderlines and should be apolitical. Fortifications are meaningless.' Peres added that 'the source of strength is not territorial but intellectual.'"

Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 13 March adds that "Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres last night said that what al-Asad will hear from Christopher regarding Israel's positions is enough to start serious negotiations. He added, however, that he thinks the Syrian leader is in no hurry to react to these Israeli proposals. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin said Israel is interested in peace with Syria and that he is waiting for Christopher's return from Damascus."

In the same newscast, Environment Minister Yosi Sarid is cited as saying that "he hopes President al-Asad is wearing a watch so he can see the time ticking away." Asked whether "Israel has given Secretary of State Christopher anything new to offer the Syrians in his meeting with al-Asad in Damascus," Sarid says in a recorded passage: "The Israeli position enables the secretary of state to talk very seriously about the peace process and the need and the possibility to accelerate its pace."

Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew on 13 March carries an ITIM report on page 2 saying that, "speaking to reporters after the cabinet session yesterday, Environment Minister Yosi Sarid said he supports a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for proper arrangements with Syria." Sarid adds that "if Israel is satisfied on the issue of full normalization, proper security arrangements, and the right timetable, 'it will have to decide about a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.'"

Rabin, Peres Comment on Syria Track, Peace

TA1003180095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Rabin says Syria does not constitute a military threat to Israel. The real threat is from the ugly and extreme wave of Khomeynism without Khomeyni. Rabin told the Middle East Conference of the Socialist International in Tel Aviv that no one will invest in the territories if the economy of the Palestinian Authority is not budgeted and well arranged. Law and order were a condition for investment and economic prosperity, Rabin concluded.

Foreign Minister Peres told the meeting there was no way of speeding up or slowing down the peace process. The main effort up to the elections will be made in negotiations with Syria, the foreign minister added.

[Also reporting on Rabin's and Peres' remarks, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 10 March adds: "This afternoon the prime minister said that Israel has agreed to allow the entry of another 7,000 Palestinians for work in Israel, but that a full closure will be reimposed if another suicide attack takes place." The report goes on to say that Peres, addressing domestic affairs, stated that he "believes one should not distinguish between a direct election of the prime minister and that of Knesset members. There should be the direct election of both the prime minister and Knesset members, and if it is impossible to do so in the time left before the elections, the direct election of the prime minister had better be postponed for the time being. Asked whether he intends to compete for the premiership he said he would not answer this question now. In Peres' opinion, one of the mistakes of the Ramon octet was its aggressive air"]

Rabinovich Sees 'Hope' for Syrian Talks Resumption

TA1403074795 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Interview with Professor Itamar Rabinovich, ambassador to the United States, by Udi Segal, following the meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Segal] Ambassador Rabinovich, what is the Syrian message the Americans handed Israel this morning?

[Rabinovich] I do not think we are dealing with messages but with ongoing work. The Americans were in Damascus yesterday, returned to Jerusalem last night, held the first working meeting this morning, and are now on their way back to Damascus. The indirect message from that is that there is ongoing work, hope, and expectations for a resumption of the talks.

[Segal] If I am not mistaken, I am hearing the same formula I heard on previous visits. Are we still not talking about a resumption of the talks? Are we still not talking about progress or a breakthrough, as we heard from the U.S. delegation?

[Rabinovich] It is difficult for me to deal with things attributed to the American entourage. We are cautious in using expressions like progress or a breakthrough. What is important is that a serious and significant dialogue is taking place. I very much hope that there will be a practical outcome.

[Segal] Do you see the resumption of talks between yourself and Ambassador al-Mu'allim and between the chiefs of staff?

[Rabinovich] I can see it; the question is at what distance. I think that right now we should focus on the main thing, which is the stopover the Americans are making in Damascus. In another few hours, we will have the real picture and we will not have to speculate.

[Segal] There has been a lot of talk about the strategic decision made by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to go for peace. Today, following the first Christopher-al-Asad meeting in Damascus, can we say that he is serious about peace?

[Rabinovich] I have no doubt that he is serious. The question is what is a strategic decision. We are not dealing with theoretical formulas, but with down-to-earth things. If the strategic decision is translated into practical steps which permit negotiations and their successful completion, then the final answer is positive. If a strategic decision is not translated into such concepts then it remains a very impressive expression but meaningless.

[Segal] What about raising the talks to a political level?

[Rabinovich] We are currently putting the stress on resumption of the negotiations, and I think the issue over how they will be handled, the location, and the participants will be dealt with only at a later stage.

[Segal] On the message itself: Does it contain anything on which to hold more serious negotiations with the Syrians than in the past?

[Rabinovich] I think that if we look over the past two and a half years—or three and a quarter years, if we use different arithmetic— in which the negotiations have been conducted, then the answer is that the current negotiations are much more serious and deal with a wider area than previously. The very fact that they have continued for such a long time should bring us to the conclusion that we should not hand down judgment based on progress or lack of progress from one day to the next, but always try to see things in perspective.

Beilin: More Than Just Talks Resumption Needed

TA1403082895 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin by Menahem Friedman; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Friedman] In your opinion, what is the meaning of the fact that Hafiz al-Asad has for the first time talked to us—through Christopher—about the specifics of the security arrangements on the Golan Heights?

[Beilin] It means that the negotiations may be getting on a new track and that U.S. involvement is vital. After all, a similar round of talks could have taken place a month ago and the situation would not have been all that different from what it is now. Hence, U.S. involvement was necessary to reach a more intensive level. If Secretary Christopher is indeed prepared to switch roles from mailman to matchmaker, as a journalist put it earlier in your program, this could definitely signify an intensification in the U.S. involvement. This would lead to more accelerated negotiations and to exposing the Syrians' true intentions as to whether they are really ready to make peace with us. If the answer is yes, they will find here a partner who is prepared to make peace and is ready to pay a price.

[Friedman] Could this significant change in al-Asad's position—getting down to details—be the result of an agreement or understanding in principle between the two sides about the final withdrawal line, as the Syrians have been demanding all along?

[Beilin] No, the answer to your question is definitely no. We have not reached that stage yet. Unfortunately, we are at a much earlier stage. We actually had a pause in the talks. Since February 1994 there have only been talks on the ambassadors' level without delegations and a few meetings of the chiefs of staff. In fact, there are no negotiations with Syria today. I hope this visit may revive them and lead us to talks on a senior political level or, alternatively, to much more frequent visits by the Americans here; not just once every six months, but more frequent visits which will take into account the short schedule of all of us.

[Friedman] Let me put it differently. Perhaps Hafiz al-Asad heard from us, through Christopher, what Shim'on Peres calls the inevitable price.

[Beilin] I think both sides more or less know the explanation. Contrary to the complexity of the agreement with the Palestinians, we all know more or less what can be reached at the end. This is what made me doubt whether the Syrians ultimately want to reach peace or may have other considerations. If they want peace with us, I think we do not need a lot of time to finalize the arrangements. The formula more or less exists, and the main problem will be the exact border, the security arrangements, and the normalization. All these issues have been raised in the past, and I believe we only need a few but intensive months to finalize them.

[Friedman] By the way, how do the Syrians know what the price is that Israel is prepared to pay for full peace?

[Beilin] I think the parameters are clear, although we have not yet discussed their exact significance.

[Friedman] How do they know these parameters? Did they receive such authoritative information from any Israeli official?

[Beilin] If they listen to IDF Radio and follow the Israeli media they have heard the pronouncements made by our heads of state to the effect that the depth of the withdrawal will be tantamount to the depth of peace, that settlements will have to be uprooted as part of the arrangement, and the references to Syrian sovereignty on the Golan Heights. If they heard all these things and they do not understand where this arrangement is leading to, I think they are actually unable to conduct negotiations. However, since I do not think they are fools they must have other inhibitions.

[Friedman] Let us be more specific. It is widely known that Yitzhaq Rabin is not prepared to pull out from the entire Golan Heights but maintains that Israel can withdraw to the western edge of the Golan Plateau. Shim'on Peres goes farther and is prepared to withdraw to the international border. The Syrians have probably learned as much from IDF Radio, if not directly from him then certainly from leaks, but nevertheless they have not yet come forward. In other words, they want more than that.

[Beilin] Precisely. If they want more than what you just mentioned, it may very well be that they do not want to reach an agreement. They may want to appear willing to negotiate but not to reach the agreement itself, which carries a certain price for them, perhaps even not a simple one, since peace with Israel would entail a change in all the parameters of the current Syrian regime and the government. Now, if they want to reach an arrangement with us, I think its general nature is clear to them although its details are obviously not, and we would need a few months to clarify them. Therefore, I think that if the Americans shuttle between the two capitals, between Damascus and Jerusalem, to clarify the details of each side's perception and if the Syrians are sincere in their wish for peace we could reach an arrangement within a rather short period of time.

[Friedman] Is it true that one of the indicators of al-Asad's current flexibility is that Syria is prepared to drop the demand for symmetry in the security arrangements and is willing to accept mutual but unequal arrangements along the international border when it is demarcated?

[Beilin] The truth is symmetry is such an impossibility that I am not really impressed by this statement. Symmetry is simply unfeasible, but mutuality is basically understandable. If they have really dropped their demand for symmetry, I cannot regard it as a substantial change. What I will consider a substantial change is willingness to enter intensive negotiations rather than play some game of floating negotiations and occasional semi-secret meetings; to sit down and hold businesslike talks about security arrangements and the details of the normalization and to reach peace.

[Friedman] Could you assess when the talks between the ambassadors and the chiefs of staff will resume in Washington?

[Beilin] I cannot make such an assessment. I would like to tell you something else: If all that happens in the end is just a resumption of the talks in Washington at the pace they were being held even before February 1994 we will not attain peace in the foreseeable future. Therefore, in my opinion, we need something more than just a resumption of the talks.

[Friedman] Dr. Yosi Beilin, thank you very much.

[Beilin] Thank you.

Details of New Procedural Offer Described

TA1303114195 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 13 Mar 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jerusalem is anxiously awaiting the meeting this morning between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and the latter's reaction to the message sent by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. [passage omitted]

Political sources yesterday said that Rabin's message to al-Asad includes an "extremely serious" declaration of intents regarding Israel's intention to reach an agreement with Syria as soon as possible. The message also includes a new Israeli proposal in the procedural sphere.

According to one version—which could not be confirmed yesterday—Israel proposes to set up committees to simultaneously discuss all the components of the "peace package" between the two countries, including withdrawal from the Golan Heights. To date, Israel has insisted on discussing the withdrawal only after all other matters are concluded.

Christopher will also raise the Lebanon issue with al-Asad and will describe to the Syrian president Israel's desire to attain a quick solution of the Lebanese issue, including an Israeli willingness to withdraw from south Lebanon following a period of half a year in which no terror attacks will be launched against the security zone. [passage omitted]

Peres, Hasan Decide on Water Resources Plan

TA1303064095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan have formulated a plan for developing Jordan's water resources, which they will present this week to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and a European Union representative. The two met yesterday in Amman to discuss a project for building dams on the al-Yarmukh and Jordan rivers. The dams are among the projects included in the peace treaty to provide Jordan with tens of millions of cubic meters of water. The EU and Germany have promised to help fund the project, which is estimated to cost about $400 million. Sources in Jordan yesterday denied reports that Germany is asking Syria and the PLO to promise not to sabotage the water project.

Peres and Hasan also discussed setting up a free-trade zone in Elat, Taba, and al-'Aqabah, and regional cooperation in security.

Foreign Ministry Top Brass Discuss Ties With U.S.

TA1303192495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon the Foreign Ministry top brass, headed by Foreign Minister Peres, held a discussion on Israel-U.S. relations, with an emphasis on the ties with Congress and the difficulties with the Jewish U.S. community.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the assessment was made that Israel should not encounter any difficulties in obtaining congressional approval for the same amount of aid received so far, although the cut in aid to Israel's neighbors cannot be ignored.

Recommendations concerning the relationship with the Jewish community included greater cooperation—with an emphasis on the peripheries—and the dispatch of Israeli experts, including academics, reserve generals, and politicians, to explain the situation.

Peres on Determination To Pursue Peace Until Elections

TA1303165695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres says the government is very determined to complete the political process with the Palestinians and to exhaust the possibilities in the negotiations with Syria in the remaining 20 months before the elections. He said he does not expect al-Asad to provide immediate replies to the Israeli proposals he received via Christopher. Peres made these remarks in a Labor Knesset faction meeting. Yo'el Nir reports:

[Begin recording] [Nir] Shim'on Peres announced in no uncertain terms: The government will deal with peace, not politics, in the 20 remaining months before the elections. We are totally determined to use these 20 months up to the last day before the elections, if necessary, in order to complete the political process, Peres said.

He asserted that the changes in the Histadrut labor federation and the primaries are important, but these are not the critical issues, the political process is.

Peres further said: We intend to reach the second stage of the negotiations with the Palestinians, enabling the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] to redeploy so as to allow the elections to the Palestinian Authority to be held. He again brought up 'Arafat's commitment to act against terror and our commitment to wind up the negotiations by 1 July.

As for the Syrians, he said:

[Peres] We apprised Christopher of a series of old and new concepts which, I think, allow the reopening of the negotiations with Syria. I am not certain Christopher will return with answers today; I believe al-Asad will need some time to digest things. I know that some of our fellow party members are against any concessions on the Golan Heights and against ceding the Golan Heights. I understand how they feel. In our present situation, we have decided to make every difficult decision. We are not waiting for applause, we are not waiting for polls, as they will not affect us one bit.

[Nir] Shim'on Peres added that whenever national security is discussed in Israel, we usually speak of a conventional war and the attempts to invade Israel through the Golan Heights. He believes there are two or three other perils: terror, missiles, and nonconventional weapons. These perils have nothing to do with whether we retain the Golan Heights or not. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Foreign Minister Peres stressed that there are three issues Israel will not address prior to the elections: the Jerusalem issue, the demarcation of permanent borders, and settlement displacement.

British Prime Minister Major Continues Visit

Tours Northern Border

TA1303115695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and his guest, British Prime Minister John Major, are currently touring the Lebanese border. From an observation post situated on the mountains above Qiryat Shemona, Prime Minister Rabin showed his guest the meeting point between the Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli borders. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the prime minister said that Secretary of State Christopher and President al-Asad are currently holding their meeting, adding that he hopes that tomorrow morning he will be fully briefed about the outcome of the meeting. Rabin said that he hopes it will be possible to achieve progress in the negotiations.

Major General 'Amiram Levin, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Northern Command, apprised the British premier of the strategic importance of the Golan Heights. While taking the view from the observation post on the Lebanese border, Maj. Gen. Levin said that there are incidents with Hizballah in this area every night. Levin said that even last night Hizballah suffered a casualty in a shooting incident with the IDF.

Peres-Major Meeting Reported

TA1303165195 Jerusalem GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE in English 1450 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Issued by the Foreign Ministry spokesman on
13 March]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met this morning (Monday), 13.3.95, with British Prime Minister John Major.

During their meeting, Peres briefed Mr. Major on the peace process, and said: "The current government has 20 months until the elections, and we are determined to dedicate this time to advancing all channels of the peace process."

Peres also noted that we are in the midst of implementing the second phase of the agreement with the Palestinians, deepening and broadening peace with Jordan, and trying to open the door in negotiations with Syria. He emphasized that, just as there is no alternative to weapons in time of war, there is no alternative to economic development in time of peace; the Middle East needs funding and economic assistance in order for peace to be stable.

According to Peres, one of the ideas taking shape is that of joint Israeli-Palestinian industrial parks. About 7-8 of these parks are planned, and it is hoped that each participating country will undertake to build one of these parks, which will be named after it.

Prime Minister Major expressed great interest in the industrial parks, and said that he would favorably consider the creation of such a park by Britain.

Peres also raised the issue of a regional development bank, saying that the Middle East has been home to negative institutions until now; the bank would be the first positive institution common to all states of the region. He stressed that the World Bank does not lend funds for projects, but to states; accordingly, the Palestinians cannot avail themselves of its assistance. Israel, meanwhile, cannot receive such a loan because it is considered a developed country; Jordan cannot receive loans because it owed a great deal of debts.

Foreign Minister Peres added that we do not intend to repeat the mistakes of the European Bank. We want a bank with an administration which can solicit funds and offer guarantees to private regional investors. Peres added that he would be glad to see a regional economic confederation between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians—and a political federation between Jordan and the Palestinians.

Prime Minister Major said that he would be glad to meet with Peres again tomorrow, in order to continue their discussion of relevant issues.

Major on 'Land for Peace' Concept

TA1303170795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] British Prime Minister John Major this morning received an on-the-spot briefing on the strategic importance of the Golan Heights to the security of Israel. Major visited the area with Prime Minister Rabin and after being briefed by the head of Northern Command, Major General 'Amiram Levin, he said he understood Israel's position that the Golan can only be returned after her security is assured. Back here in Jerusalem this afternoon, Major, who came to the country with a big delegation of businessmen, discussed the importance of economic ties not only for both countries, but for peace in the region and as a counter to terrorism. Alan Ben-'Ami was at Major's press conference:

[Begin recording] [Ben-'Ami] Britain's long-standing drive to do business in the Middle East has finally reached Israel. This was clear from Prime Minister John Major's remarks during his press conference, in which he talked repeatedly of his hopes for increased business ties between Britain and Israel.

[Major] I brought with me more than 20 top captains of British industry to open new doors in what is already a rapidly growing commercial relationship, and I believe it has been extremely successful. They have agreed to establish more regular links, they have agreed to set up—as I had hoped they would—an Israel-Britain Business-to-Business Council; precisely the sort of result which can ensure that the business relationship continues to improve. A number of opportunities and new openings have presented themselves in the last couple of days. I dare say, there are many others that exist that haven't presented themselves on this occasion, but will, I hope, as the relationship develops. I intend to see that these opportunities are exploited to the full.

[Ben-'Ami] The British prime minister also referred more than once to the role international economic aid and development can play in boosting the peace process, particularly with regard to the Palestinians.

[Major] Discussion of a range of economic matters led to a wider point upon which the prime minister and I were very firmly agreed, and that is that the development of economic activity, and the increasing prosperity and employment that follows that growing economic activity, is the best and surest antidote to terrorism. There is no doubt, as I indicated a moment or so ago in what I had to say by way of opening remarks, that if you can remove many of the causes that feed people into a terrorist background—the very low quality of life, the very low standard of living, to raise some hope and opportunities where none existed before—then you have made a significant contribution towards it being possible for a settlement to be reached.

[Ben-'Ami] Major, who visited northern Israel and got a strategic look at the Golan Heights, said it was important for peace negotiations between Israel and Syria to move ahead on the basis of land for security.

[Major] The concept of land for peace—land for security to put it more aptly, I think—is one that has been around in the negotiations for some time. I doubt that there are many people who believe that we will be able to carry this process to a conclusion unless there is progress down the Syrian track. I hope that the meetings that Warren Christopher has had in the last couple of days will help provide a key that will move it forward; but what is clear is that the Golan would be handed back providing there is an agreement that satisfies Israel's security. Israel will need to be satisfied on that, and I was reassured about that point this morning. [end recording]

Rabin Urges Greater UK Role in Peace

MS1403095595 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 11 Mar 95 p 17

[Report on interview with Prime Minister Yitzaq Rabin, by Anton La Guardia, in Jerusalem; date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For Mr Rabin, the declaration of 1917, enshrining Britain's promise to create a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, is the seminal act in the creation of Israel.

"As a result of the Balfour Declaration, my father joined the British Army's Jewish Legion with 1,600 other Americans," said the 73-year-old Israeli Prime Minister in an interview with The Daily Telegraph.

"My father came here as a British soldier in 1918, and that is why I was born here."

Mr Rabin wants to harness Britain's traditional influence with the Arab world. This friendship was until recently the cause of Israeli resentment; now it offers an opportunity.

"Britain has got influence in many quarters of the Middle East, and it is very important that Britain—individually and as part of the European Union—should assist whenever and wherever possible to bring about more openness in the Arab world to start relations with Israel," he said.

Mr Major is only the second British Prime Minister to visit Israel since the last British troops sailed from Haifa in 1948. Mrs Thatcher made the trip in 1986.

Relations between Britain and Israel, said Mr Rabin, have improved "tremendously" in recent years. The main reason is Israel's 1993 autonomy agreement with the Palestinians, although nearly two years later the deal is still only half complete and in constant danger of collapse.

Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994, and other Arab states have started to improve relations with the Israelis. But countries such as Tunisia and Oman have stepped back from normalisation because of Syrian pressure, according to Israel.

"We would like to see a more active role for Britain to be involved in the economy of those countries that are engaged in the peace process, in terms of economic assistance and the wider European Union effort," said Mr Rabin.

"We appreciate very much Britain's decision to write off part of Jordan's debt.

"We have to bear in mind that if the peace process does not bring social and economic benefits for the ordinary citizens of countries engaged in it, the peace will not be real and stable."

To hear an Israeli prime minister openly lobbying for economic help for its former Arab enemies is a remarkable sign of how far the region has been transformed.

But that is not the perception of most ordinary people. Israel has suffered an unprecedented spate of suicide attacks against civilians and soldiers.

Palestinians in the occupied territories have been subjected to severe restrictions on travel and working in Israel.

The Palestinian economy has declined, rather than improved, since Mr Rabin first shook hands with Mr Yasir 'Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Palestinians enjoy limited autonomy in the enclaves of Gaza and Jericho. But the first promise of self-rule in the rest of the West Bank—the grudging minimum acceptable to most Palestinians as a first step towards statehood—has yet to materialise.

Mr Rabin says that he cannot afford the risk to Israeli security.

The second stage of autonomy in the West Bank will also be the signal for Palestinian elections.

"Extreme Islamic terror, mainly carried out by suicidal terrorists is the obstacle. Otherwise there would be no problem for me to implement (self-rule) quite quickly also in the West Bank," said Mr Rabin.

"I believe it is very important that Palestinian elections will take place. I assume Chairman 'Arafat will win and I believe in it. But if he will not, at least I will know that I don't have a partner."

Mr Rabin, a former Chief-of-Staff, sucks frequently on his cigarette and speaks slowly, at times losing himself in literal translations from Hebrew into heavily-accented English.

But his point is clear. He blames Iran, and also Mr 'Arafat for not doing enough to control the new breed of Islamic violence, which he describes as "Khomeinism without Khomeini".

"I will go on if Chairman 'Arafat or the Palestinian Authority will show more determination in coping with terror from their own territories," he said. "Only then will it be possible for me to fulfil what we are committed to do."

Like Mr Major in Ulster, Mr Rabin is an unpopular leader trying to make an historic compromise.

"We were very impressed by what Mr Major has achieved in Ireland," he said. "We wish we could also have brought the end of terror."

Mr Rabin's standing in the polls now lags far behind that of the Likud newcomer, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Prime Minister survives on a majority of just six, and some Labour members are in revolt over his willingness to give up at least part of the Golan Heights in a peace agreement with Syria.

Mr Rabin's troubles seem to come from all sides: inflation is too high, the ultra-orthodox Shas party has declined to rejoin the coalition; and, in recent weeks, members of his Labour party have been embroiled in a scandal of alleged misuse of trade union funds for political activity.

Our interview was shifted at the last minute from Mr Rabin's office to the Israeli parliament, where he could be on call for tight votes.

But the old general will not surrender and will press on with the peace process.

"As long as I have a majority of one out of 120 seats, I will go on," he said. "I will not pay attention to the polls because I believe this is what has to be done."

Mr Rabin has trouble hiding his disillusionment with the PLO. He shows little warmth for Mr 'Arafat, and he is often condescending.

Would he sign the same agreement again?

Mr Rabin paused for a telling moment, then said: "Basically yes. It was a strategic decision by us, by me as Prime Minister, to make 'Arafat a partner."

Israel is due to hold elections next year, and Israeli officials are warning the Arabs, particularly Syria, that the "window of opportunity" for peace is closing. The Prime Minister hinted that he would stand again.

"As long as you are in politics, you try to continue."

Mr Rabin spoke only in vague terms about the future of the region.

He said he wanted "separation" between Israel and a future "Palestinian entity" although he would not say it would be a state.

Absorbing some two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would endanger the Jewish character of Israel, he said.

But Israel would maintain access to the Jordan River as its "defence border"; the frontier with the West Bank would be adjusted "for defence" and East Jerusalem, annexed after the war in 1967, would remain in Israeli hands.

Mr Rabin said many of the settlements, particularly those in built-up Arab areas, were a "mistake". But he is not willing to uproot them yet.

"Not now," he said. "I hope that once we will reach a peace with the Palestinian entity there will be a possibility for Israeli settlements to stay, and there will be a real peace.

"The Israelis will have to decide what to do, whether to stay there or to leave."

U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Arrives

Says Talks With al-Asad 'Very Good'

JN1303172295 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1700 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has arrived in Amman and immediately went into talks with his majesty the king.

Mr. Christopher arrived from Damascus, where he held five hours of talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and raised hopeful signs of resuming stalled negotiations between Israel and Syria. Mr. Christopher said, through an aide, he would shuttle back to Israel after a brief stop in Jordan, then return to Damascus tomorrow for more talks with President al-Asad. The aide described the five-hour meeting in Damascus as very good and said President al-Asad and Mr. Christopher covered a full range of issues.

King, Christopher Hold Talks

JN1303182795 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between the Jordan, led by His Majesty King Husayn, and the United States, led by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, have started at Raghdan Palace. The meeting is still going on.

The meeting is attended by Crown Prince Hasan, senior officials, and members of Mr. Christopher's delegation.

The two sides exchanged views on the entire peace process, all developments related to that process, and the efforts exerted to remove the obstacles preventing the progress of the peace process on the other tracks to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and strengthen security and stability in the region.

During the meeting, Christopher will review the outcome of his current tour, which has thus far included Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Self-Rule Area, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

In addition to the peace process, the talks between His Majesty King Husayn and Secretary Christopher will focus on Jordanian-Israeli [as heard] bilateral ties.

King, Christopher Hold News Conference

JN1303210495 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 2000 GMT 13 Mar 95

[News conference by King Husayn and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher with unidentified correspondents in Amman on 13 March—recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Husayn] Well, once again a warm welcome to a good friend, secretary of state of the United States of America. On his visit here, we've had a chance to speak of developments in the recent past and of our efforts for the establishment of peace in this region, a comprehensive peace, and, obviously, our achievements on the bilateral Jordanian-Israeli dimension in terms of the peace treaty and what has been achieved so far. And, I am very happy indeed to have the opportunity to give the secretary a chance to answer any of your questions, and maybe I can help in any way I can. Welcome.

[Christopher] I am very pleased to be back in Jordan tonight to meet with his majesty and his senior advisers. It was only last October, of course, that the king and Prime Minister Rabin signed the Jordan-Israel peace treaty. It was really an act of extraordinary vision and courage on the part of the king. It's one that the world community will not soon forget. Where others have hesitated, the king has demonstrated the statesmanship that we've long come to associate with his leadership in this region.

Jordan not only signed the peace treaty, but it has made very strong efforts to implement it. In many respects, the relationship between the prime minister of Israel and the king of Jordan are a model for how to implement a new peace treaty to make sure it becomes a warm peace, and not just in words, but in action as well.

All of those who have a real interest in Middle East peace have a stake in supporting Jordan. And the United States has a deep interest in doing so, a deep interest in Jordan's wellbeing and security, success of peace that it's made with Israel. That's why President Clinton is determined to support Jordan's willingness to take the risks for peace. That's why last year, last August it was, the Congress authorized the debt forgiveness of all Jordan's official debt to the United States. Today, my message to the king and to the people of this great country is very clear: America's commitment to Jordan will be fulfilled. I told also the king about steps that the United States is prepared to take to address Jordan's security need, needs.

We all recognize, of course, and it is proper, that elections can and do change American politics. But they should not, indeed they must not, change the nature of our vital interests or undermine the credibility of our commitments. Therefore, I was very pleased to tell his majesty that the President and I have been working closely with the bipartisan leadership in Congress to maintain our commitments to Jordan. We hope and expect that the full Congress will act very soon to support the effort that we've been leading.

Tonight, King Husayn and I also discussed the other tracks of the peace process and the steps that have been taken during my recent trip. We agreed that there should be every effort to sustain the momentum that exists within this region toward a comprehensive peace. I want to particularly note that we reviewed the plans underway for the summit in Amman at the end of October, which is a follow-on to the economic summit in Casablanca. This will, I think, bring into focus our commitment to the establishment of a Middle East development bank. It is, I think, a symptomatic reflection of Jordan's leadership that they're having this summit here in Jordan, and I hope and expect it will be the occasion for the kind of economic and business support for Jordan that it deserves because of its leadership. As you also know, Vice President Gore will be visiting here in Jordan in a few days. And as the king and I discussed, he will be visiting the United States before the end of this month. Those back and forth visits are only a reflection of the closeness of our partnership, a partnership that serves so well the cause of peace and prosperity here in the Middle East. Thank you very much for your hospitality, as always, Your Majesty.

[Correspondent] I'd like to ask one question to you Mr. Secretary and one question to you Your Majesty. Mr. Secretary, we understand that you have delved today into the substance of negotiations on security arrangements on the Golan Heights. Looking forward, do you see yourself playing a substantive role in helping broker those talks? Or do you think those talks should be confined to the military officers on both sides—on the Israeli and Syrian sides? And to you, Your Majesty, if I may, on the issue of dams on the Jordan River and the al-Yarmuk River—I understand the crown prince is going to Bonn this week with Foreign Minister Peres, do you see a problem of Syria or even the Palestinians not giving a gentlemen's agreement in supporting such dams? We understand that the Europeans have asked that those parties also give their tacit approval.

[Christopher] David, for some weeks and months now, I have identified the security issue as one of the most difficult outstanding issues between Syria and Israel and one that needs to be addressed very directly and very effectively if they are to move forward in the peace process. As a result, the United States has played a role in trying to examine the options, trying to find ways to bring the parties closer together on the military issues. It is significant, I think, that the parties look to us to have discussions like that under our aegis. I would think that ongoing discussions between the two nations, if and when they take place, will continue to be under the aegis of the United States. Of course, it is primarily for the parties to address those issues, but they believe that we can be helpful. They believe that we can play a role. And as long they believe that, we will certainly stand ready to do so.

[Husayn] My answer to your question, Sir: If you look at the map, you will find that we are at the bottom end of those who receive the waters of the Jordan and the al-Yarmuk. So, in fact we have more demands, maybe in the future in the context of peace to satisfy the needs of this country. I, therefore, I do not expect any Syrian objections to that. It is something that we will have to resolve bilaterally and, hopefully, collectively, in the future, in terms of our rights there. And as far as our position goes regarding our Palestinian brethren, again, we are not infringing on their rights whatsoever. What has happened is an agreement between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in terms of what is of concern to both sides. And we have every hope that we will see, on the ground, in addition to the will and the determination that is there, progress towards fulfilling all the agreements in terms of the construction of the dams with the help of friends and at the same time the passage of water from Israel to Jordan on the dates agreed.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty [words indistinct], Your Majesty, President Clinton gave you his word last year that he would relieve your debt. That has not happened. Do you feel that the United States has gone back on its word, and how important is it to your country that the United States fulfill this promise?

[Husayn] That the United States fulfill this promiser is very, very important because of the leadership role that the United States plays in this world and the partnership that we have with our friends in the United States in terms of trying to secure a comprehensive, just, lasting peace in this region. Nor do I believe the President is any less enthusiastic in terms of his commitment or his endeavors to fulfill these commitments. And now that for that matter the secretary of state, we have had discussions earlier on, and for that matter I believe that even in Congress and in the Senate there is a good atmosphere now of greater understanding of what the problem really is. So, I am firmly convinced that, God willing, there will not be a problem and that the commitments will be honored fully, and that this will help in terms of what we are trying to do elsewhere as well to remove some of the burdens as we approach a new phase, a new era, and our attempts to give people the feeling that should be there as soon as possible that peace brings with it change and brings with it better opportunities, and brings with it the kind of life that was not possible over all the years that have passed.

[Correspondent] Several Gulf states have expressed their reservations regarding the Middle East Development Bank. After your talks in Jeddah with the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] foreign ministers, did you get the feeling that they had some reservations about the overall peace process, and if so, how are you going to respond to that?

[Christopher] I wonder if I could ask you whether you want me to focus on the Middle East peace process or the Middle East Development Bank?

[Correspondent] I mean if they have some reservations regarding the Middle East Development Bank, could that mean they also have reservations concerning the overall peace process?

[Christopher] I'll answer both sides of that. I see a growing support for the Middle East Development Bank. There was a meeting of the task force just a few days ago in Washington and it seems to me that the questions about the bank are being resolved, that European countries that had doubts are beginning to have a stronger belief in the validity, viability of such a bank. The countries of the Gulf, I urged their support when I was there, and I think that they will be ultimately strongly supportive. There may be some differences between countries there, depending upon their resource base. But I see growing support for the Middle East Development Bank, and I am very pleased that Jordan will host the next meeting of the task force on the 1st and 2d of April. And we're looking toward the Amman summit in October, the end of October, for a important next step with respect of the creation of that bank. So, that's going well.

On the Middle East peace process, the communique that came out of the GCC meeting that was hosted in Saudi Arabia was a very strong endorsement of the Middle East peace process. There is an understanding there of the importance of that process and the commitment to be supportive of it. I found it very interesting that the chairman of that conference, the foreign minister of Bahrain, indicated that there was a strong thrust toward normalization and that there'd been no pulling back on normalization in the GCC countries. So, it was very positive in both of those regards.

[Correspondent] Did you get chance to explore in depth potential security arrangements, mechanical arrangements and such, on the Golan Heights? Have you concluded that Israel need not retain the territory for security to be safeguarded? Is there a substitute so that it will be at least as safe as holding on to the Golan Heights from which there've been no attacks on Israel since 1967?

[Christopher] That would be a question, of course, that the parties would have to address and Israel would have to address. It is not for me to reach such conclusions. We've been working on the security aspects of the matter in order to be helpful to the parties. I've had intensive discussions with both Prime Minister Rabin and President al-Asad about that in the last few days, and I will have further discussions with each of them before I leave the region. But, it is their security, each of their security, their mutual security, that is their concern, and it is one that we will try to help them achieve a satisfactory outcome. But, it's not my judgment to make, it's my role to try to be helpful, creative, supportive, inventive, provide options for the parties, help them get together on what will be inevitably be most difficult issues of this peace process between them.

[Correspondent] His Majesty King Husayn has spoken of a potential, regional military role for Jordan following the peace treaty with Israel. You've spoken of some steps that the United States will take on the security question. I wonder whether you could give us some more details, because it seems that, if we might say, the shopping list presented by Jordan to the United States did not get a favorable response. And if I could ask his majesty a question: Did Mr. Christopher bring you any good news from Damascus about any possible easing of the strains between you and President Hafiz al-Asad and could we possibly expect a meeting of the kind you had with Mr. Mubarak and Yasir 'Arafat? Thank you.

[Christopher] Well, on the question that's directed to me, we see Jordan is playing a very important security role in this region. It is country with long borders and a military that needs to be, as the king has said, modernized and given new and modern equipment. The United States is anxious to try to be helpful in that connection. I don't have anything specifically to say by way of detail on that subject. We may be able to say something more by the time the king gets to the United States near the end of this month. But, it's something on which we're working together, because we understand the importance of the modernization of the Jordanian Army and to ensure that its equipment is of the highest caliber.

[Husayn] Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Secretary, you saved me the need to answer the first part of this question. We are obviously talking and talking about it very, very seriously, and I believe that peace needs to be protected. And I hope very, very much indeed that, with this in mind, it will be possible to talk with our friends about our needs to modernize our equipment and to enable our people to defend peace and defend Jordan and defend democracy and defend everything that Jordan stands for: pluralism, respect for human rights. And I very much hope indeed that we will have the opportunity to discuss every aspect of this problem in great detail in the very near future and come up with some definite answers. But I'm very, very assured by what I have heard today from the secretary of state in that regard.

As for the meeting with President al-Asad, he's a brother; he's a brother head of state. We have met in the past, and we will hopefully meet again. And I think the secretary has enough trying to get the Israelis and the Syrians to meet for me to add to that any expectations as regards Jordan and Syria. No. But I think whenever the opportunity arises, whenever there is a need, we will meet, and I believe that people ought to meet if they are to get on with their responsibilities towards their people, towards the future of this entire region. Thank you.

[Correspondent] Mr. Secretary, have you managed to convince his majesty that the maintenance of tough sanctions on the sale of Iraqi oil is the proper way going forward? And do you have any estimate of the amount of Iraqi oil being smuggled or sold illegally through Jordan at this time?

[Christopher] In the relatively short time we had together tonight, we discussed the risks that Iraq continues to present to the world community, but we did not discuss the sanctions or the oil issue, and if we have an opportunity, we'll do that sometime in the future. If I could add a footnote to one of the answers that both of us have given. In connection with the debt relief issue, we have gone through a period in which some of the new subcommittee or committee leaders in the Congress, I think, did not have a full appreciation for the contributions that Jordan has made and for the commitment that we have to them because of the risk they've taken for peace. But sometimes you get the benefits of having gone through that kind of a period. And one thing that I want to emphasize, your majesty, is that there is a much deeper understanding of the role that Jordan has played and much sense of gratitude for the risks that you've taken for peace. So I think that out of this period of time in which we've had such an active sense of advocacy on Capitol Hill, aided by a number of your friends, that there is a new and better understanding of the role that Jordan has played, and as I say, that is a kind of a dividend that has come out of this period in which there was some uncertainty, but now looks to be in a very positive frame of mind.

[Husayn] Thank you very much indeed. May I answer you or challenge this rather aggressive question by saying that, first of all, as far as the port of 'Aqabah is concerned, the regime that was agreed upon is still in place, in terms of Lloyds Register, and that is functioning extremely well. Secondly, Iraq owes Jordan a lot of money, and oil to Jordan has continued to come in repayment of what Iraq owes this country. Thirdly, that the Iraqi problem—which we didn't discuss today—is a problem that concerns all of us in terms of the human dimension of it. And beyond that, Iraq is as close to us as Mexico is to the United States. So, in a context of peace, eventually, I certainly hope and pray that this problem will be resolved and that Iraq can regain its position in terms of its people amongst the nations that are free and democratic and where pluralism and respect for human rights exists and where Iraq can play its role in shaping the future of this region within the context of peace and within the context of its right as a country and as a people. Thank you.

Renewal of U.S. 'Pledges' Lauded

JN1403093995 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 14 Mar 95 pp 1, 20

[Editorial: "Renewing the American Pledges to Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Mr. Warren Christopher did well when he clearly announced before the Jordanian public that President Bill Clinton and the U.S. Government are committed to the pledges made to Jordan and that the U.S. administration is determined to carry out its obligations with regard to writing off Jordan's debts and meeting Jordan's security requirements.

Public opinion here and in the Arab region was shocked by the position adopted earlier by the U.S. Congress regarding the Jordanian indebtedness, especially since the U.S. Administration had earlier pledged in public to write off these debts over a period of three years. It had also committed itself to activate the economic dimension of the peace process and make a palpable shift in the lives of the region's peoples.

Jordan did not take the risk of peace in order to be rewarded by forgiving its debts or receiving foreign aid. Nevertheless, it did not expect the U.S. Congress to treat it in such a manner. It also did not expect to be treated as a victim of domestic U.S. changes in the wake of the latest Congress elections.

Therefore, reiterating his country's pledges to Jordan, the U.S. secretary of state was, indeed, defending the U.S. credibility which suffered much due to the unexpected position of the U.S. House of Representatives. Thus, Washington seemed unable to convince anyone in the Middle East of its ability and desire to push the peace process forward and safeguard the steps taken on the long road of peace.

While we view Warren Christopher's statements with satisfaction and relief, we hope that the American pledges to Jordan and to the peace process will be implemented through practical and tangible steps and measures away from any domestic American differences and any changes that took place or might take place as regards the relationship between the Congress and President Clinton.

AL-RA'Y Views Washington's 'Moral' Debts

JN1303104095 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 13 Mar 95 pp 1, 21

[Editorial: "Jordan's Debts to Washington"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We do not know how the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the Middle East will end. However, we deem it necessary to remind him of a fact that should not be overlooked by the two parties [Jordan and the United States] who have been involved in a long-standing relationship of friendship. Neither of these two parties should hesitate to discuss this issue with the other party. We believe that there is much in common between our two countries and are eager to safeguard these things. President Clinton might have been referring to this fact when, in his address to the [Jordanian] Parliament in November, he said: "The United States and Jordan are fighting the same battle. So, allow me to say that in the name of the United States of America we will not let you down." What happened recently in the U.S. Congress was letting down, or let us say was its practical beginning.

Representatives of the U.S. legislative authority have debated the so-called Jordanian debts to the United States and the American assistance to Jordan. Certainly, this debate was not held against a balanced political backdrop. Here we would like to clarify that the link between our option and search for peace, represented in our signing of a peace treaty, on the one hand, and the benefits of peace on the other was not made by us. Rather, the Americans themselves promoted this linkage. They were eager to promote it through the U.S. administration executive officials and many officials in the legislative authority. Here we would like to remind Mr. Warren Christopher, who will visit us today, of what President Clinton said in the Jordanian parliament. His exact words were: "The United States believes that peace has fruits. We have pledged to forgive Jordan its debts and to seek to realize development in Jordan in a way that would enable the people of this country to reap the fruits of peace."

President Clinton said: "The process of building peace in Jordan and the Middle East is a process whose benefits should be felt by people. If people failed to feel these benefits, fear will triumph. We do not want fear to triumph. We want welfare and prosperity to triumph and we seek welfare and prosperity for all." The American President cautioned against the exploitation of anti-peace forces, forces of hatred and terrorism, of poverty and unemployment to create violence and wreck the cause of peace. He said: "We must say to these forces: You will not succeed because we will stand against you."

Here we painfully ask: Was the stand adopted against these forces or against peace forces? And, was the position adopted by the Congress members a contribution to peace or was it a substantial and direct support for the forces of extremism, hatred, and terrorism that exploit poverty and unemployment and create violence?

We do not want to dwell on the issue of Jordan's indebtedness to the United States. After all, these are merely financial debts that can be rescheduled, postponed, or reduced. However, we want to highlight the U.S. debts to Jordan. These are moral debts in the first place and cannot be rescheduled, postponed, reduced, or scrapped. They cannot be subject to discussion or argument neither by President Clinton's administration nor the U.S. Congress. We mean by this the Jordanian concern for peace, the Jordanian endeavors to make peace, and the consequences of peace that will reflect on people's life in the region and future generations. If it is regrettable to reward the killer, then it is destructive to punish the victim. If the U.S. billions were poured on Israel in the past to finance its wars, acts of aggression, and expansion policies, then we believe that it is Jordan's right to obtain sufficient millions in return for its search for peace and development drive. It should be noted that these funds will not be used to serve any military, aggressive, expansionist, or settlement goals.

President Clinton knows these facts. However, this knowledge will remain worthless if it is not dealt with as the basis for defending peace in the region and the whole world. The President told the Jordanian Parliament that: "If peace is to be permanent, then there has to be an improvement in the quality of life of the ordinary people, who should reap the fruits of peace." We do not think that what happened reflects an eagerness to make peace permanent or real.

Finally, the real catastrophe is not one's inability to settle financial debts, but rather one's refusal to honor moral, political, and human obligations. Therefore, we believe that these facts should be put before the U.S. secretary of state who will visit us today. We should not forget to stress that the United States is the party that linked peace with forgiving Jordan's debts or supporting it to make peace yield benefits to all citizens. We believe that this U.S. linkage is an obligation that should be implemented by those who made it and kept talking about it before our people, their people, and the entire world.

Industry Chief on Need for U.S. Financial Support

JN1403113395 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Mar 95 p 2

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Middle East peace process could be jeopardised if the American administration does not extend financial support to Jordan through debt relief and economic aid, one of the Kingdom's business leaders said Monday.

Khaldun Abu-Hassan, President of the Amman Chamber of Industry, also cautioned against labelling all Muslims as terrorists and called for Jewish lobbying to make Israel more forthcoming in making peace with the Arabs.

Mr. Abu-Hassan, addressing a delegation from the American Bar Association (ABA) which is here on a familiarisation mission, also emphasised to the lawyers' team the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, whose country is suffering from international sanctions.

Mr. Abu-Hassan told the delegation in a meeting held at the Amman Chamber of Industry that Jordanians were frustrated by a recent move by a congressional subcommittee to slash to $50 million an administration request for a $275 million out-lay for debt write-off for Jordan.

"This debt is infinitessimal in comparison with the massive aid for Israel, which includes grants, interest and loan guarantees which amount to no less than $6.32 million, creating a wide disparity between Israel and its neighbours, including the Palestinians," said Mr. Abu-Hassan.

Noting the commitment of Jordan to peace and that the Kingdom had already signed a peace treaty with Israel, Mr. Abu-Hassan said: "It is our impression that the U.S. administration has not been appreciative enough of this role and has neither been supportive nor rewarding of the steps and the courageous role of His Majesty's enlightened and beneficient leadership.

"Thus, we believe that the peace process will be jeopardised if the American policy does not lend it enough effective and sufficient support."

On Islam, Mr. Abu-Hassan said: "There is a growing feeling against the orchestrated mass media campaign against Islam, where the followers of the Islamic faith are branded, en masse, as terrorists.

"It is a campaign which does not only marginalise the peace process but also frustrates faith in it and its objectives."

Mr. Abu-Hassan told the delegation, which includes Arab Americans as well as Jewish Americans, that the support of the American Jewish community was vital for the success of the peace process.

"They would do well to advise Israel to be more forward in implementing the peace accords, to be less incompassionate in dealing with the Palestinians, less boastful of military prowess and more respectful of human rights," he said, expressing hope that American Jewish organisations "will uphold their support for the much coveted and just and permanent peace."

Underlining that the people of Iraq are exposed to untold suffering as a result of the international sanctions imposed on their country in August 1990, Mr. Abu-Hassan said:

"It's high time to see the embargo on Iraq totally lifted to allow the Iraqis to resume their normal way of life, concentrate on rebuilding their houses, business, schools and universities, and so, allay the sufferings of the general public of Iraq, where hunger is rife and diseases are wide spread."

Mr. Abu-Hassan described the Amman Chamber of Industry as a democratically constituted institution representing more than 90 per cent of Jordan's manufacturing units with overwhelming private sector participation. He also noted that many Jordanian industries operate under international licensing arrangements.

Following Mr. Abu-Hassan's presentation, the delegation members and representatives of Jordanian industries exchanged views on the Kingdom's industry and investment climate.

The American Bar Association delegation is here on a visit aimed at gaining first-hand information on the investment climate in Jordan.

Ministry of Industry and Trade 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib and ministry as well as Amman financial Market (AFM) officials briefed the delegation on Sunday.

On Monday, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) officials met the delegation and presented a briefing on the Kingdom's banking system and facilities for early transfer of funds to and from Jordan.

'Imad Timawi, programme chairman of the delegation, told the Jordan Times on Monday that the delegation members were impressed by what they heard and learnt while in Jordan. They would advise their clients back in the U.S. to "look seriously" at investment opportunities in Jordan, he said.

Chamber, Officials on 'Day of Solidarity With South'

President al-Hirawi Speech

NC1403121395 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0853 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Speech by President Ilyas al-Hirawi at an extraordinary session of the Chamber of Deputies in Beirut to mark the "Day of Solidarity With South Lebanon and Western al-Biqa'"—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister, Honorable Deputies: We came to you when your esteemed Chamber started its activities and when the massive confrontations were weighing us down. Your efforts and cooperation had a great effect on strengthening the march of the State and the homeland.

This time round, we come to you while all the country's institutions, areas, and groups are standing firm with one heart and in one rank to declare their adherence to the just and comprehensive peace, inasmuch as they defend their being. They refuse to abandon one grain of this homeland's soil or sovereignty. This Chamber, chaired by Speaker Nabih Birri, has proven that it is the mother establishment with regard to initiative, performance, and role. [passage omitted]

Lebanon confirms that it no longer accepts using its own assets to respond to Israel's lies and maneuvers. Israel besieged Lebanon, and the United States lifted the siege, but where is Lebanon's right to its independence and security?

Let everyone know that Lebanon is no longer the variable in the equation of the game of war and peace in the region. Lebanon is no longer the arena for settling anyone's accounts. Lebanon, the country of peace, is Lebanon the homeland, the country of unified decision in the face of any attempt to shake its stability and sovereignty.

Esteemed Deputies, we address you, and, through you, the whole nation, to confirm that for the past five years the issue of the south and western al-Biqa' has been our cause. It is the cause of all Lebanon, because our policy on every inch of our land is part of our national sovereignty. Sovereignty cannot be divided or partitioned. Any attack on any inch of the south and western al- Biqa' is an attack on all Lebanon. And the security of the north, the mountain, al-Biqa', and Beirut are all part of the security of the south and western al-Biqa.

It is no secret that everything we have achieved in the national peace march is geared to supporting this sacred cause. Reuniting the homeland—people, land, and institutions—shows our unity to liberate our occupied land. Praise be to God, the people are firm in their cohesion, and strong in their adherence to the Lebanese entity. The Lebanese have seen that the active unite further before the challenges. Entrenching our security proves that whoever can entrench their security internally can protect security on the border. Stopping social and economic deterioration, launching growth activities, reactivating the cycle of work and production, and returning the refugees to their homes are all necessary for strengthening steadfastness. Despite Resolution 425 being a precondition for starting the peace process, we showed our commitment with our brothers and our response to the international desire in establishing a just and comprehensive peace. We entered the Madrid negotiating process after receiving assertions from the United States guaranteeing our legitimate rights to the implementation of Resolution 425 stipulating Israel's withdrawal from our occupied territory without conditions or restrictions, up to our internationally acknowledged border. We knocked on every possible door. We resorted to the United States and to international efforts to indicate that the cause of the south and western al-Biqa' is not only a Lebanese cause, but the cause of the just and comprehensive peace. Whoever wants peace acknowledges Lebanon's right to its land and independence. The peace process could be quickened or postponed, but, in either case, why does Israel not take the initiative to implement this resolution to show its good intentions toward peace. Resolution 425 is not a peace resolution, but one that terminates the aggression of one state against another, both of them members of the United Nations. It is a fact that we have attacked no one. We are not hampering a just and comprehensive peace. So why does Israel insist on occupying our land, although it has already discovered that occupying our land does not guarantee its security? If Israel wants to isolate us, then we are more loyal to Arab unity. If Israel wants to impose its peace and conditions on us, then we are more entitled to our holy right, which we protect as we protect Arab dignity.

The cause of the south and western al-Biqa' is the cause of international conscience and legitimacy. It is a test for the brothers and friends in supporting our legitimate right. Where is the United Nations while Lebanon's sovereignty is being desecrated? Where are human rights while civilians and innocent citizens are being victimized by destruction, killing, detention, kidnapping, and homelessness? We support the liberation of land and citizen. We stand alongside all those who help us retrieve this legitimate right. We do not need new ideas from here or there. We need the implementation of international resolutions.

Israel is practicing all forms of dominance without deterrent or restraint, to adjust either its internal affairs or the situation between it and those who acted independently and made peace with it. It does this to create domestic problems for us and distract us from our demands, to light the fuse of sedition, or to distract us from our main cause.

But, with the state of peace, the collective national will was demonstrated. We will let no one drag us into getting excited under the cover of one-upmanship of any kind.

Esteemed Deputies, we have rights. The road to rights is part of the rights themselves. Our power lies in knowing how to acquire and hold on to our rights. Being sensible in our calculations and employing the resources available to us is the choice from which we will not deviate.

What we are going through is a test for us as a homeland, which, through every ordeal, remained stronger than the ordeals. We are not weak. We are too big to act irrationally or take the road to the unknown. We do not accept being among those with whom Israel reached the post-peace stage before achieving peace itself. We are the sons of a homeland that has a history and a heritage as big as its future. Any step that does not protect Lebanon and its rights is against Lebanon; any position that does not back Lebanon and its rights is against Lebanon.

We therefore invite you to think with us about what can achieve a positive shift in light of the established principles that we will never compromise, regardless of the sacrifices.

First, we will relinquish no atom of our soil in the south and western al-Biqa';

Second, we will not let our people, land, and dignity be prey to desecration, negligence, and oppression;

Third, we will enhance the State's march to enable it to realize the citizens' aspirations and enhance their national, economic, and social immunity more effectively; and

Fourth, we will see that no just and all-embracing peace will be established without Lebanon and Syria; no separation will be made between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks; and no just and all- embracing peace will be established without liberating the Golan, south Lebanon, and western al-Biqa'. We and Syria will keep working for a just and all-embracing peace.

Esteemed Deputies, what kind of just and lasting peace can be established through the game of maneuvers and the logic of deals if rights and the nations' fate are at stake?

They advise us to stop the resistance, then they turn a blind eye to the Israeli prime minister and most of his ministers as they inspect their troops to back them in occupying our land.

Whoever does not want resistance should put an end to occupation. Let them withdraw their army and we can establish security on our international borders.

We demand a just and comprehensive peace. Israel insists on endless wars. We have no alternative but to confront. The confrontation must be all-out, starting with sensitization through development and reconstruction. The war in the homeland has ended, Brothers, but the war for the homeland has not ended. [passage omitted]

In your names we address a word of gratitude to my brother President Hafiz al-Asad and the approach of cooperation and coordination and a word of appreciation to Europe for its recent support for the implementation of Resolution 425. Let me thank all fraternal, friendly, peace-loving, and justice-loving states for their support.

We address a word of appreciation to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon and the states contributing to it. We greatly appreciate the sacrifices they have made since 1978 and the services they are providing in the south. International legitimacy is requested to use its influence so that the legitimate Lebanese authority can continue to impose its authority in the South.

In your name we call on the two peace sponsors to honor their pledges to avoid turning Madrid into an aimless event or another entry in the book of history.

Esteemed Deputies, from the forum of the Chamber of Deputies I appeal to all the Lebanese to make this the day of raising the banner of right above all daily preoccupations and interests. Take the oath of loyalty on this day. Prove to the entire world that for every shell, we plant a tree, for every fire, we build a factory, and for every scheme, we build a school.

Let us start the march of establishing life, freedom, and dignity. This is how we stand fast and this is how we can have the strength to liberate our precious land. Your homeland is bigger than this imposed reality. Triumph for rights is a triumph for Lebanon. Long live Lebanon. [applause]

Speaker Birri's Address

NC1403115495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0836 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Speech by Speaker Nabih Birri at an extraordinary session of the Chamber of Deputies in Beirut to mark the "Day of Solidarity With the South and Western al-Biqa'"—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] I welcome his excellency President Ilyas al-Hirawi under the dome of the Lebanese Parliament, which is proud that his excellency was one of its legislators. I also welcome the Lebanese Government's positive response to this call on this historic day on which Lebanon—its people and institutions—rises up in defense of its national sovereignty against Israel's continuous violation of the sanctity of its territory, airspace, and territorial waters, its continuing military terrorism against Lebanon, and its turning of this country into a field of experiment for the weapons of destruction and death. [passage omitted]

On this day on 14 March 1978, Israel began an invasion of Lebanese territory known as the Litani operation. The name was enough to prove that the real reason for the invasion was to try to correct a so-called mistake committed by the Israeli Command during the June 1967 aggression, when Israel did not expand northward toward Lebanon, up to the Litani River. [passage omitted] The excuses for that invasion, which was to remove the Palestinian armed presence and avenge a military operation on the Tel Aviv coast, were not entirely correct. The Palestinian armed presence, which was the Israeli target in 1978, is now legitimate in Gaza and Jericho. Those labelled by Israel as terrorists have become models of moderation and partners in peace, according to Israel's specifications. Israel has continued to occupy dear parts of Lebanese territory. This means that the Litani operation, the Peace in Galilee operation in 1982, the operation of destruction and expulsion in 1993 [Operation Accountability], the recent naval blockade, the ball of fire that is striking Lebanon, and the steel darts fired yesterday all aim to expand and adjust the border by imposing peace on Lebanon according to Israel's security conditions. [passage omitted]

During the phases of the 1978 aggression the UN Security Council issued Resolution 425 in accordance with a proposal by the U.S. representative. The resolution called for firm respect for Lebanon's territorial unity, sovereignty, and political independence within its internationally recognized borders. It asked Israel to immediately stop its military operations against Lebanese territory and to withdraw its forces without any delay from all Lebanese territory. The resolution formed a United Nations Interim Force in South Lebanon [UNIFIL] to oversee the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, restore world peace and security, and help the Lebanese Government reestablish its authority up to the Lebanese border.

An example of the arrogance of the continuing Israeli aggression is that Israel is trying to formulate the Lebanese State's policy in the fields of defense and security. It is putting on pressure to prevent the Lebanese Army from taking the appropriate measures to bar Israel from exploiting any opportunity to confuse public order in Lebanon after the arrest of the perpetrators of the Southern Suburb explosion, one of a series of bombing operations aimed at undermining Lebanese national security. Israel has issued statements in Tel Aviv asking Lebanon to adopt a course that will lead to the legalization of the occupation. In other words, it wants the Lebanese Army to adhere to Israeli orders, even regarding inspection procedures [at crossing points], and naturally to confront the resistance. This means that the Lebanese security authorities must play the role of border police or a guardian angel for the occupation and deprive the Lebanese people of their right to resist the occupation.

Resistance is a natural result of the occupation. In light of Israel's refusal to respect Lebanon's territorial integrity, it is Lebanon's weapon of peace against the Israeli occupation. [passage omitted]

Today's Lebanon is different from the Lebanon of 1978. Today's Lebanon is unified in its administration and willpower. The Lebanese people in all their sects and affiliations are determined to liberate their land and restore their national sovereignty up to the international border. Within this context, Lebanon adheres to Resolution 425 and to resistance. Israel must choose to face the resistance of all Lebanon and its people or implement Resolution 425. Israel must choose to respond to the international will, fully respect Lebanon's unity, independence, and sovereignty, and withdraw from Lebanon or face the resistance, which will become more comprehensive, and include all Lebanon, especially our occupied territory. [passage omitted]

Peace in the region and in Lebanon is a Lebanese need. But Lebanon and Syria have chosen a just and comprehensive peace based on UN resolutions, which will end the Israeli occupation of our land and the Golan. We will remain hand in hand with Syria until we achieve this objective. [passage omitted] rights is a triumph for Lebanon. Long live Lebanon. [applause]

Chamber of Deputies Statement

NC1403110495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0910 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Statement issued by the Chamber of Deputies at an extraordinary plenary session in Beirut to mark the "Day of Solidarity With the South and Western al-Biqa'"; read by unidentified speaker—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Marking the Day of Solidarity With the South and Western al-Biqa', the Chamber of Deputies held an extraordinary session attended by his excellency the president of the Lebanese Republic. The government was represented by his excellency the prime minister and their excellencies the ministers.

The Chamber listened to speeches by His Excellency President Ilyas al-Hirawi and His Excellency Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri, reviewing the situation resulting from Israel's continuing occupation of parts of Lebanon's territory and its excessive, daily aggression that involves every aspect of life.

Appreciating the Lebanese people's national unity, which was grandly reflected today in the all-embracing solidarity represented in the official and popular participation in the program planned for the day, the Chamber of Deputies unanimously declares that Israel's persistence in ignoring and refusing to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 and its continuing encroachment on the Lebanese State's sovereignty over its territories, airspace, and regional water constitute a blatant violation of the UN Charter, the principles of international law, and the rules governing the national rights of the Lebanese Republic.

Accordingly, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies makes the following recommendations to the government:

1. To make intensive efforts with influential states to take the steps necessary to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425 on the basis of Chapter 4 of the UN Charter;

2. To continue to upgrade the efficiency of the Lebanese Army, both in terms of numbers and equipment, and the other security apparatuses to give them confidence in their ability to undertake the tasks of defense and security as efficiently as can be;

3. To constantly emphasize solidarity and cohesion with sister Syria, relying on the national unity demonstrated today, to preclude any act that involves either state independently, and to reiterate support for the Resistance until the full Israeli withdrawal;

4. To embark at once on carrying out the necessary and urgent projects in the Lebanese area that Israel is occupying, according to the allocations of this year's state budget as well as previous budget allocations;

5. To activate efforts with influential states to release the Lebanese detainees being held in Israeli jails; and

6. To renew efforts to urge fraternal Arab states to honor their commitment to support Lebanon's steadfastness and reconstruction.

The Chamber of Deputies greatly appreciates the sacrifices the UN Interim Force is making in the south in the various security, social, and humanitarian fields.

Nasrallah: Christopher 'Defends Zionist Enemy's Logic'

NC1303081195 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah has called for (?backing) the Resistance with every rifle and every helping hand the Resistance arenas can embrace. He stressed that all our media and writers must campaign in that direction.

He emphasized: The Zionist enemy will find nothing in our Resistance but more determination and willpower to continue the jihad and continue the path, which is unavoidable, regardless of the sacrifices. If we stop and become weak inside, we would [words indistinct] our martyrs, prisoners, wounded people, and the relatives of our martyrs, he added.

Speaking at a memorial service in al-Nabi Shit, Nasrallah added: All we need do is seek our nation's victory over our enemy; this victory is inevitable, guided by heaven, and only a matter of time. He added: With our unity we can reduce this time and become the generation by whose hand this divine promise is fulfilled.

On Christopher's visit to the region, the Hizballah secretary general said: This man came to the region to defend the Zionist enemy's logic over the nuclear treaty. He emphasized that America is the enemy and foe of this nation and, accordingly, it cannot be a friend or fair arbiter. He noted that the most dangerous threats against our nation are fragmentation and division. He added that some political news is being exploited to stir sectarian strife.

Hizballah Offers To Swap Israeli, SLA POW's for Detainees

NC1303173495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1647 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah official Shaykh Nabil Qawuq praised the general show of solidarity with the south and announced that Hizballah is willing to accept a solution that involves the release of all POW's and detainees held in the occupation jails in return for the release of two Israeli POW's and more than 20 recruits of the puppet militia [South Lebanese Army, SLA].

Shaykh Qawuq's remarks were made during a ceremony held by Hizballah to honor journalists working in the south.

Warren Christopher, Delegation Visit Damascus

Christopher's Statement on Talks Cited

JN1303165195 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1115 today. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Syrian Ambassador to the United States Walid al-Mu'allim, U.S. Peace Coordinator Dennis Ross, and U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Christopher Ross attended the meeting.

Following his meeting with President Hafiz al-Asad, Christopher made a statement to journalists this evening in which he said: I have just finished five hours of talks with President Hafiz al-Asad. This means I have held very intensive talks during my current tour of the region. I can say that we have again entered serious talks and I am searching for means to achieve progress.

He added: Before I leave the region tomorrow, I will have had the opportunity once again to hold intensive talks with President Hafiz al-Asad. I do not have much to say now. Perhaps, after meeting the Israeli prime minister I might have something to say when I return to Damascus tomorrow.

Christopher left Damascus this evening after a two-day visit to Syria. He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', a number of senior officials of the Foreign Ministry, the Syrian ambassador in Washington, and the U.S. ambassador in Damascus.

Al-Asad Receives Delegation

JN1303185995 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the People's Palace at 1115 today. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', Syrian Ambassador to the United States Walid al-Mu'allim, U.S. Peace Coordinator Dennis Ross, and U.S. Ambassador in Damascus Christopher Ross attended the meeting.

Christopher conveyed to the president a message from President Bill Clinton on the importance of continuing the peace process. The talks during the meeting dealt with the peace process and the obstacles and difficulties facing this process.

The president listened to the ideas carried by Christopher, and these ideas were discussed. The president presented Syria's viewpoint vis-a-vis the subjects of discussion.

Christopher is expected to return to Damascus tomorrow, Tuesday.

Christopher Returns to Damascus

JN1403092795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0915 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in Damascus this morning. He was welcomed at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', ranking Foreign Ministry officials, the Syrian ambassador in Washington, and the U.S. ambassador in Damascus.

Al-Asad Receives Delegation Again

JN1403105895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network In Arabic 1015 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad received U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the al-Rawdah Palace at 1115 today.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'; Walid al-Mu'alim, Syria's ambassador to the United States; Dennis Ross, U.S. peace coordinator; Christopher Ross, U.S. ambassador in Damascus; and Mark Paris, U.S. presidential assistant for Middle East Affairs in the U.S. National Security Council.

Aide Urges U.S. To Abandon 'Slow-Process Policy'

MM1303160795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Mar 95 p 3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Syria Believes Time Is Not in Favor of Peace, Urges United States To Abandon Slow-Process Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus—Syria has announced that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will arrive in Damascus tomorrow and will hold talks with President Hafiz al-Asad and Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' the day after, and he will leave for Israel in the evening of that day. It said that Christopher would take with him Syria's answers to the Israeli views he brings. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, a Syrian official expressed pessimism about the prospects of success for Christopher's mission if Israel maintains its policy of partial withdrawals. The official urged Christopher to abandon the slow-process policy, because time is not in favor of peace.

According to the Syrian official, any delay in declaring Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon would not be in the interest of peace which Israel claims to want. He said that the statements so far made by Israel and the U.S. Secretary of State do not call for optimism and that Israeli practices and prevarications are a flagrant violation of the main terms of reference for the peace process. He added that, judging by the unrealistic statements of Israeli officials, Israel seems to be bent on making the establishment of peace a difficult task and on maintaining the tension and explosive situation in the region.

The Syrian official described Christopher's tour as a clouded one fraught with speculations and risks of failure because any success for the peace efforts would require new and clear Israeli positions. He said that Syria was waiting to see what new elements Christopher would bring to fulfill the just peace requirements.

He said that if the United States cannot convince Israel that its safety and security cannot be at the expense of the rights of the other parties, then the peace process will stand still and will not make a single step forward, and that no matter how many meetings are held between the Syrian and Lebanese and Israeli sides, there will be no results if Israel maintains its policy of partial withdrawals, separate deals, and disregard for the terms of reference of the peace process. The Syrian official said that the success of Christopher's tour depends totally on the Israel position. If Israel insists on its current position on the peace process, he said, the U.S. secretary's mission will not fulfill its objectives, but if Secretary Christopher brings something indicating a change in the Israeli positions, he will get full understanding and cooperation from Syria and he will find that Syria could not possibly close the doors to peace which it regards as a fundamental strategy in its policy. Syria, he added, could not possibly abandon the fundamental constant principles of the peace process which restore rights and territory to their owners. He said that Israel must realize that peace cannot be imposed through terrorism and military power nor can it be made by forfeiting rights, territory, and national interests.

The Syrian official stressed that the U.S. Administration should abandon the slow-process policy and should realize that the time element is not in favor of peace, and also that if Christopher brings nothing new then the U.S. efforts will be a waste of time and will make no progress and U.S. credibility will suffer a setback.

Mashariqah Addresses Rally on Peace Process

JN1303162395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Under the patronage of the greatest teacher, militant President Hafiz al-Asad, the Executive Bureau of the Teachers' Union today organized a grand central rally at the 7 April Hall in al-Suwayda' Governorate on the occasion of Arab Teacher's Day.

Vice President Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah deputized for the president. [passage omitted]

Amid a fury of applause and chants of long live the party and its secretary general—militant leader Hafiz al-Asad, Vice President Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, representing the festival's patron President Hafiz al-Asad, delivered a speech in which he conveyed to all teachers his excellency's hearty greetings, best wishes, and congratulations on this occasion, as well as his appreciation for the great efforts they exert to build the country and realize progress, development, and prosperity. [passage omitted]

The president's representative spoke about Syria's position on peace in the region. He said: Peace for Syria is a strategic option. Syria seeks to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the UN Security Council, particularly Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, to liberate the occupied Arab territories and regain the usurped Arab rights.

The president's representative said the peace process started with the Madrid Conference in late October 1991 to provide the means to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that will return rights to their Arab owners, guarantee Israel's withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders, and establish security and stability in the region in implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and in accordance with the Madrid formula and the land-for-peace principle.

He said: This process has failed to arrive at the desired objective despite the lapse of some three and a half years since the Madrid conference was convened. This is due to Israel's intransigence, noncompliance with the resolutions of international legitimacy, and its endeavors to bypass the peace process. It is due also to Israel's desire to subject the region to its hegemony and control its political, economic, military, and cultural resources by talking about a new Middle East order, which it can lead and run.

Mashariqah added: This Israeli trend was strengthened when it saw certain people ready to relinquish rights and dignity. It was also strengthened when it saw others hasten toward normalization, despite the fact that Arab lands remain occupied and national rights remain usurped.

He also noted Israel's daily crimes and massacres against the Palestinian Arab people in Palestine and southern Lebanon, which belie its claims about peace and its alleged interest in it.

The president's representative clarified Syria's firm positions on the peace process. He said: Syria acts on the basis of our national and pan-Arab principles. Syria does not follow anyone's lead on crucial issues and no one in the world can drive it to what it does not want, as was stated by militant President Hafiz al-Asad at the iftar banquet he hosted for the ulema on 27 Ramadan [27 November]. President al-Asad also said at the time: We take all possibilities into account. Political action must not lead to any relinquishment of rights or dignity. The unilateral acts by some Arab brothers do not affect Syria's position and we will not accept any solution that does not meet our needs or preserve our dignity. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Leader Mazari Killed

Others Also Killed

LD1303163495 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports received from Ghazni Province by the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY, 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari [Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami leader], his secretary 'Ali, Commander Abozar, and a number of others, who were being flown by the Taleban to Qandahar Province, were killed in Ghazni Province.

Reportedly Killed While Captive

BK1303163195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1610 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 13 (AFP)—'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, the most important leader of war-torn Afghanistan's minority Shi'ite community, was killed while being held captive by the Taleban religious movement Monday [13 March], sources in Pakistan and Kabul said.

A Taleban spokesman in Pakistan said Mazari died in a gunbattle on a helicopter in the air, but commanders of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani said in Kabul he was killed when the helicopter crashed.

Mazari, capturued by Taleban fighters during fighting in southwest Kabul at the weekend, was being flown, along with some other Wahdat prisoners, to Qandahar in south Afghanistan, said Taleban spokesman, Mohammad Masoom Afghani.

While the helicopter was in flight, after taking off from Charasyab, 25 kilometres (15 miles) south of Kabul, Mazari snatched a Kalashnikov rifle from a Taleban guard, Afghani said.

Mazari killed six Taleban guards before he was himself gunned down, said Afghani, speaking by phone from the Pakistani border town of Chaman, opposite Qandahar.

In Kabul, three pro-Rabbani commanders said a crash resulted in the deaths of Mazari, his secretary and a Wahdat commander.

Stocky and short with sharp eyes, Mazari was being held at Charasyab and photos taken by Western reporters, which were available in Kabul Sunday, showed him in captivity—looking frightened with his hands and feet tied.

Mazari became leader of a united Shi'ite front, the Hezb-e Wahdat, which was created by eight Afghan Shiite groups after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, following their defeat at the hands of the mojahedin.

During the decade-long Afghan Jihad (holy war) against the Soviet-backed communist government in Kabul, Mazari was one of the main figures in the crusade against the Soviet occupation.

Before the emergence of Wahdat, he had led a group called Nasr (victory), which was considered the most revolutionary of all Shi'ite factions and the faction most faithful to the hardline of late Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeyni.

More recently, Wahdat—which had controlled a chunk of territory in southwest Kabul, where it frequently had clashes with pro-Rabbani troops—was split into two groups.

While the Mazari-led group was bitterly against striking any compromise with Rabbani's military strongman, former defense minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, the other headed by Akbari adopted a conciliatory stance.

Wahdat, under Mazari, had joined hands with Rabbani's bitter foe, former premier Golboddin Hekmatyar, in an alliance that also included northern Uzbek warlord, former communist general 'Abdol Rashid Dostam.

The coalition launched a military campaign to oust Rabbani in January 1994, triggering an inconclusive war in and around Kabul that left thousands dead in the capital, besides driving tens of thousands into seeking refuge elsewhere.

Mujahidin Sources Confirm Death

LD1303232395 Tehran IRNA in English 2301 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 14, IRNA—According to Afghan mujahideen sources here on Monday [13 March], a top leader of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] has been killed while in captivity of the Taleban group. The source confirmed the martyrdom of Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, the secretary general of the Wahdat, who was taken prisoner during the assault of the Taleban group on the people of Kabul.

It said Hoj. Mazari attained martyrdom on Sunday while being transferred from Chahar Asiab to Qandahar.

Radio Said To Claim Mazari Assassinated

BK1403041095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Afghanistan, Hezb-e Wahdat leader 'Abdol Ali Mazari has been killed during a clash with Taleban on board a helicopter. A Taleban spokesman said that Mazari and several other members of the faction were being flown to Qandahar following their arrest from the Kabul suburbs. Radio Kabul, however, reported that Mazari was assassinated, along with a number of commanders, in Ghazni Province on his way to Qandahar Province.

Meanwhile, forces loyal to President Rabbani have so far held back from launching a full-scale infantry assault against the Taleban on the southern outskirts of Kabul. The two forces traded rocket and artillery fire across their frontline.

Iran Blames Taleban Group

NC1403111295 Paris AFP in English 1014 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 14 (AFP)—Iran on Tuesday [14 March] denounced the death of 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, leader of the Shiite movement Wahdat in Afghanistan, and blamed the Taleban forces for the latest bloodshed.

The foreign ministry "condemned the martyrdom of 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari and several members of the central committee" of his Hezb-e Wahdat faction.

"The blame for this tragedy lies with those whose duty was to ensure the security" of Mazari, it said, referring to the mainly Sunni Taleban student movement.

Wahdat is considered to be the military arm of the Shiite community and Iran's closest ally in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

The circumstances surrounding Mazari's death on Monday remain unclear. A Taleban spokesman in Pakistan said he died in a gunbattle on a helicopter taking him and other prisoners to Qandahar in south Afghanistan.

But three commanders of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani said in Kabul he was killed when the helicopter crashed.

Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati told the TEHRAN TIMES newspaper of his "concern over the continuing bloodshed."

For the first time an Iranian leader openly criticised the Taleban religious movement saying that "instead of pursuing peace it is causing a bloody war."

Rabbani's soldiers are attempting to force the Taleban out of the Kheyrabad hills and the Islamic militia's base at Rish Khvor, south of Kabul.

The government has already taken advantage of clashes between the Taleban and the Wahdat to launch an offensive to chase the two factions from the capital.

"We have no intention of asking the Afghan nation to do this or that, but being neighbors we have the utmost wish that the civil war in that country would end at the earliest," Velayati told the English-language paper.

"Iran will support a peace that can provide equal and just opportunity for all people and groups."

Meanwhile, the daily JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI hit out at the Talebans' role in the Afghan war, saying that "the very existence of Shiism in Afghanistan is threatened by the emergence of this new force."

Reportage on Government-Taleban Clashes in Kabul

Taleban 'Savagely Attacking' Suburbs

LD1303210295 Mashhad Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dari 1430 GMT 13 March 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The joint forces of the government, Mr. Akbari's branch of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], and the Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Movement] of Afghanistan, succeeded in capturing three important positions held by the Taleban group on (?Eskot) Hill after hours of fierce fighting southwest of Kabul. According to the Central News Unit from Kabul, Taleban forces stationed in Rish Khvor and Kheyrabad hills southwest of Kabul, fired tens of rockets and shells at Kabul last night. Hospital sources in Kabul say that hundreds were wounded and tens were killed as a result of the Taleban group's attacks and shelling.

There are also reports from Nimroz and Farah Provinces about the results of fighting between the Taleban group and the forces of General Esma'il Khan. While the Taleban group claims to have made advances in these two provinces, sources close to the government in Kabul say that from a 40-strong group of Taleban forces which had mounted a new attack on the township of Delaram in Farah only three escaped with their lives. The rest were either killed or captured.

The Taleban group, which in the past called for the establishment of peace, calm, security, disarmament, and control of Kabul without bloodshed, is now savagely attacking residential districts of Kabul.

Government Prepares for Assault

BK1403100895 Hong Kong AFP in English 0917 GMT 14 Mar 95

[Report by Terence White]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, March 14 (AFP)—Government forces and the Taleban Islamic militia pursued their battle in hills south of the Afghan capital on Tuesday [14 March].

While Kabul remained calm, though abuzz with the news of the death of Shi'ite leader 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, the sound of artillery gunfire from the rival forces could be heard in southwest districts of the city.

President Borhanoddin Rabbani's soldiers are attempting to force the Taleban out of the Kheyrabad hills and the Islamic militia's base at Rish Kvor, around 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) south of Kabul.

If successful, the Rabbani troops then plan to move on the Taleban's new stronghold at Chahar Asiab a little further south of the current battlezone.

Tanks, heavy artillery and truckloads of troops were waiting near the former royal palace at Chelsiton, in the southern suburbs, for an order to join the combat in the Kheyrabad hills, witnesses said.

"We are going to push them back to Qandahar and then back into Pakistan," said one Rabbani commander.

But experts aid one of the initial aims was to force the Taleban out of positions from where they could fire rockets at Kabul.

The Taleban, led by students trained in Pakistani Koranic schools, are under pressure for the first time since launching their crusade last year to overthrow the traditional mojahedin groups that rule Afghanistan.

Starting from the Pakistan border they have taken over nine provinces but were forced out of Kabul with the Shi'ite Wahdat-e Eslami faction by Rabbani's military commander, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, at the weekend.

The death of 'Abdol 'Ali Mazari, head of Wahdat, while in Taleban custody on Monday, was prominently announced by television and radio.

A Taleban spokesman in Pakistan said Mazari was killed in a gunbattle on a helicopter taking him and other prisoners to Qandahar in south Afghanistan from Chahar Asiab. He was said to have grabbed a rifle from a guard and killed six people before being shot himself.

But, three Rabbani commanders said Mazari, who was taken prisoner at the weekend during the retreat from Kabul, died when the helicopter crashed somewhere during the flight.

Residents of central Kabul districts which have often been the target of Wahdat shelling celebrated news of the death. "Tell them that we are thanking god for the death of Mazari," said one Sunni Muslim resident.

Mas'ud-Sayyaf Units Control Southern Area

LD1303213095 Tehran IRNA in English 2001 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 13, IRNA—The western and southwestern parts of Kabul are for the moment under control of the joint forces of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf after fierce attacks on these regions by government forces, said some reliable sources here Monday [13 March]. A source close to Afghan Government in the city of Peshawar, northwestern Pakistan told IRNA Sunday that the frontlines of the Taleban group in western Kabul have been completely occupied by interim President Borhanoddin Rabbani's forces.

Some heavy air and ground attacks on Kabul against positions of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] and the Taleban forces on Saturday afternoon left dozens of dead and wounded .

Meanwhile a member of the Taleban group in Peshawar claimed today that his forces are heading towards 'Nimruz' province north of Farah province and its important airport 'Sahindand' after occupying Delaram city and some regions around it in Farah.

The clashes in Delaram under control of Isma'il Khan's forces who support Rabbani, began 10 days ago with heavy artillery and air assaults on the city. Some reports indicate that the aircraft of commander Isma'il Khan have repeatedly attacked Taleban's positions over the past two days leaving heavy casualties.

Pakistan Shifts Diplomatic Staff From Kabul

BK1303055095 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has decided to temporarily shift all its diplomatic staff from Kabul to Jalalabad in view of the escalation of hostilities between the rival Afghan factions in the capital. According to an official announcement in Islamabad, the consul of Pakistan in Kabul and other personnel has safely withdrawn to Jalalabad yesterday afternoon and the embassy has been handed over to the security personnel of the Afghan Government. The embassy officers and staff will return to Kabul as soon as the situation there improves.

Radio Views Government Readiness To Transfer Power

LD1303213595 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Recent military and political changes in Afghanistan, as a result of which the Ministry of Defense of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] drove out Mazari's militia and their new ally, the new so-called Taleban militia from west and south Kabul, led to the view that due to the crushing of military opponents and the clearing up of the capital of the dirt of their existence by the ISA, it is possible that power transfer would not take place in keeping with the plan of the United Nation's envoy.

In their commentaries and analysis, regional and world media also said the state has gained much military superiority, which has further weakened the possibility of the power transfer. During the course of the hasty changes of recent days, the UN's special envoy and his inter-Afghan talks committee have speeded up their activities, and esteemed 'Abdol Sattar Sirat, a member of the Afghan committee, paid a visit to Kabul. He spoke to domestic and foreign media about his talks with esteemed President of Afghanistan Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, and esteemed Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, the heroic commander of the Afghan jihad. Political and military changes in Afghanistan have increased UN efforts and it has reviewed its program in view of the elimination of some forces and the emergence of others.

In comparison with the previous proposal this program complies more with the existing reality of Afghan society. Under the new program the representatives of the provinces and neutral Afghan personalities form the power transfer mechanism. The presidency and the High State Council of the ISA have, as in the past, welcomed the new UN proposal on Afghanistan and asked the United Nations to speed up its work, and to very soon create the power transfer mechanism and to help the restoration of peace in the war-stricken Afghanistan.

[Words indistinct] the ISA welcomes any peace move launched inside the country or abroad. In this connection it has asked the UN's special envoy for Afghanistan to put more vigor in his work and to act in a way that the real representative of the Afghan nation will participate in the power transfer mechanism. The ISA is of the opinion and has announced that the military superiority of the state does not mean nontransfer of power but on the contrary, the state's military and political superiority is helping the peace process and escalates the power transfer, and leads our country to its people being represented in a fateful Loya Jirga. The emphasis of the Islamic state and the High State Council has always been on the transfer of power to a credible source in terms of legality and Afghan tradition. If the power is transferred to a weaker source with less legality, this will broaden the dimensions of the crisis instead of resolving the problem and will lead to tension and chaos. Given the past experience from which the people of Afghanistan—especially the people of Kabul—have suffered, the ISA has cooperated with the United Nations. This organization is wanting to take steps to restore peace in Afghanistan without wasting time in this critical juncture of our history, and is preparing the power transfer mechanism. Concurrent with the coming about of the transfer mechanism, the ISA will transfer the power to this mechanism.

India

Supporters, Opponents of Rao Come to 'Blows'

BK1303134595 Hong Kong AFP in English 1329 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Report by Chris Lefkow]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 13 (AFP)—Supporters and opponents of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao came to blows here Monday [13 March] at a meeting called by dissidents in the ruling Congress (I) party to discuss its latest debacle at the polls.

Two pro-Rao Congress MPs were manhandled and another Rao supporter roughed up as fisticuffs erupted at the meeting of Congress MPs dissatisfied with Rao's leadership of India's oldest political party, witnesses said.

The free-for-all broke out after a dissident from the 73-year-old premier's home state of Andhra Pradesh accused Rao of being solely responsible for the party's losses in Gujarat and Maharashtra, two former Congress bastions.

Several Congress MPs objected to his remarks and began shouting slogans praising Rao, sparking the melee during the gathering at the residence of dissident Congress MP, Aslam Sher Khan, the witnesses said.

Khan, in a speech prior to the fisticuffs, said the Congress defeats in last month's elections in Gujarat and Maharashtra had put the 109-year-old party in a "do or die situation."

"We have neither acceptability nor credibility among our countrymen," he said as the results trickling since vote-counting began Saturday showed the Congress going down to a humiliating defeat in the two western states.

Congress governments were toppled in Gujarat and Maharashtra by Hindu revivalist parties in the state assembly elections which were seen by many analysts as a referendum on Rao's performance and his economic reforms.

The Congress secured an unexpected majority in the eastern state of Orissa but the loss of Maharashtra, for the first time since independence, was a particularly severe blow to the party ahead of general elections next year.

Rao's leadership had already been under attack following Congress defeats in polls in two southern states in December and the latest setback was expected to increase in-fighting and calls for his ouster, at least as Congress president.

Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said, however, that he doubted Rao's opponents within the Congress party, who are led by a former minister, Arjun Singh, could mount a serious challenge to the prime minister.

"The central governaent will not be affected and Rao's leadership will not be seriously challenged," he said, simultaneously rejecting opposition demands that Rao step down and call early general elections.

"The performance of the central government was not an issue in these elections," Gadgil said. "So we reject [words indistinct] for Rao's resignation and fresh (parliamentary) elections."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), which came out on top in Gujarat and is to form a government in Maharashtra with the Hindu militant Shiv Sena, asserted that Rao had lost his "moral authority."

The Rao government has "lost whatever remaining moral authoritiy it had," the BJP said in a statement Monday. "The Congress is torn by dissensionn ravaged by corruption and lacks a political direction or philosophy.

"For them to persist in office despite rejection by the people can only cause harm to the country," the BJP said.

With one result still to be declared, the Congress emerged as the single largest party in the 288-member Maharashtra legislature with 80 seats.

But the Shiv Sena, with 72 seats, and its election partner, the BJP, with 65 seats, were in a better position to form a government in the state ruled by the Congress since independence.

The other seats were scattered among leftist and independence parties.

In Gujarat, the BJP won 122 seats while the Congress managed just 46.

Congress spokesman Gadgil denied that voters in Maharashtra and Gujarat, two states where Rao's economic reforms have had the most impact, were a rejection of the economic liberalization begun by Rao after coming to power in 1991.

"It is essentially an anti-establishment vote," Gadgil said.

Congress-I Spokesman Comments on Elections Outcome

BK1303161295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress-I says assembly election results are in no way a reflection on the policies and performance of the Center [federal government]. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newsmen in New Delhi that this was not an issue in the elections. Giving his tentative comments, Mr. Gadgil said the results are due to the anti-establishment wave in the states. He said the success of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and Shiv Sena was at least partly due to a division of secular votes. The spokesman, however, said it is too early to make any definitive analyses as a clear picture is yet to emerge.

Replying to questions, Mr. Gadgil said the Congress-I Working Committee will meet after the Bihar assembly elections.

The left parties, including the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist], The CPI [Communist Party of India], the Forward Bloc, and the RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party], met in New Delhi today to discuss the election results. Later, in a statement, they alleged that the results are a verdict against the economic policies which are resulting in price rise and corruption.

Central Bank Welcomes Dollar Decline

BK1403054795 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 9 Mar 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Sliding rupee"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The dollar's continuing decline against other major currencies brings cheer to at least one central banker, our own Mr C Rangarajan. He has been busy warding off pressure from industrial and export lobbies demanding RBI [Reserve Bank of India] intervention to depreciate the rupee [Rs] to offset the impact on exports of India's relatively high inflation. The dollar's downward progress means that even a rupee anchored firmly to the dollar would depreciate in real terms. In fact the rupee, which was rock steady against the dollar till recently, has moved from Rs 31.50 to the dollar to a shade over Rs 32, adding to real depreciation. Earlier, the real effective exchange rate had appreciated by around 6 per cent. Perhaps half of this has now been reversed.

When the rupee was devalued from Rs 20 to the dollar in mid 1991 to Rs 31.50 by 1993, many voiced the apprehension that the depreciation went beyond the needed correction. Such overshooting was in fact desirable, since devaluation itself was bound to create some inflation. The very modest trade gap in recent years, notwithstanding the liberalisation of imports, suggests that the rupee is not really overvalued. The exchange rate should be determined by the real economy, rather than by financial inflows and outflows, which can be volatile and erratic. The correct measure of the pressure on the exchange rate exerted by the real economy is the current account deficit. The trade deficit this year is unlikely to be much larger than $2.5 billion, and much of this could be offset by a surplus in invisibles. While interest outgoes are higher, so are remittances from abroad. These are not conditions which indicate that the RBI push down the rupee—that should be left to the market. The RBI need not intervene if the market forces the rupee down a bit, as has recently happened. Meanwhile the government should worry about better macroeconomic management, which will rein in inflation.

Devaluation is a means, not an end. It is sometimes necessary medicine for a country living beyond its means. But the aim must not be constant imprudence followed by devaluation. The aim must be the creation of an economy where productivity keeps rising, and such an economy will have a rising currency, not a depreciating one.

Deal With Russia on Su-30 Sale in 'Final Phase'

BK1403065995 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 6 Mar 95 pp 1, 5

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Negotiations are in the final phase between the Russian Federation and India for the sale of Su-30 multi-role combat aircraft.

Air Force sources say the aircraft, which the Russians were trying to sell to India for the last five years, may be in operational service in the IAF [Indian Air Force] by next year, if negotiations conclude soon.

Indian negotiators are reported to be using a renewed French Alphajet-Mirage-2000 offer to beat down the

Russian price quoted for the planes. The Mirage offered by the French is described as the latest model from Dassault.

The Russian side has offered between 20 to 24 aircraft for outright sale of 20 fighter aircraft. A sweetener is the offer of licensed production at the MiG-27 Assembly lines of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

The Russian side is understood to be offering attractive credit terms for the aircraft which is set to enter service in many countries outside Russia.

China has one-and-a-half squadron of the plane's older version, Su-27, while Pakistan is known to be examining the possibility of buying the aircraft which is famed for its manoeuvrability and range. Su-30 is an advanced version of the Su-27 and has longer loitering time than the older Flanker.

The Irkutsk Aircraft Production Association which produces Su-30 has claimed that it has the ability to outmanoeuvre the Mirage 2000 and the F-16, and can perform on par with the US F-18 and the European Tornado.

Capable of air-to-air refuelling, Su-30 is equipped with advanced navigation systems, a 30-mm gsh-301 automatic cannon and 10 external stores of missile armament enable it to effectively hit different air or ground targets.

With a top speed of mach 2.35, it has a 1,500-km radius of action can carry eight tonnes of bomb load and fly at 46,500 feet.

Editorial Views Zhirinovskiy's 'Tasteless' Comments

BK1403054095 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 9 Mar 95 p 8

[Editorial: "O Bad Vlad World!"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In his autobiography, The Last Thrust to the South, Mr Vladimir Zhirinovskiy writes: "I lived the greater part of my life without almost a single happy day... I never experienced real love or friendship." Today, Mr Zhirinovskiy, the postmodern face of fascist mania, is not only a wholesale dealer of happiness in the marketplace of extreme nationalism. He is a jet-setting fuhrer whose advocacy of emperorism in far-flung lands continues to evoke the images of ethnic conquest, of Storm Troopers trampling on the lesser race. Born out of the detritus of the Soviet empire, fed on the frustrations of New Russia, sustained by the anti-Semitic passions of Black Hundreds, Mr Zhirinovksiy is the author of that dangerous fantasy: Weimar Russia. Given a chance, the leader of the ridiculously labelled Liberal Democratic Party would recreate a Russian imperium, annex Alaska, and unleash a Chernobyl on Germany. His foot-soldiers have not yet managed to wash their boots in the "warm waters of Indian Ocean". But Mr Zhirinovskiy has felt at home in India, one of his "beloved" countries. Fortunately, the half-hearted host has not responded in kind when the 'Honourable' guest, in a fit of misplaced Indophilia, rhapsodised the futuristic glories of Pax Indica.

Rightly christened by the western press as Bad Boy Vlad, Mr Zhirinovskiy, true to his czarist demagogy, has inaugurated a new Mahabharata which would not be bought even by the Rightest of the Indian Right. His declaration that Pakistan and Bangladesh are artificial states which ought to be annexed to the Motherland, is a dangerously irresponsible attempt in exporting his fascist hardware to 'friendly' foreign countries. India has its own share of homespun nationalists who continue to rediscover their long lost glory in the wreckage of the other's mosque. Mr Zhirinovksiy's irredentist gospel is the last thing India needs in an age of primordial extremities. Ironically enough, while Mr Zhirinovskiy was indulging himself in Bonapartist prophecies in New Delhi, back home in Russia Muscovites were mourning the murder of a famous liberal TV journalist by fascist forces. Mr Zhirinovskiy's latest host has enough woes to cope with. And it was not worthy of the guest to resurrect a memory India is trying to overcome. Vlad-speak is as tasteless as a cheap vodka.

Minister Says Labor, Foreign Trade Links Opposed

BK1403101795 Madras BUSINESS LINE in English 6 Mar 95 p 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Union Minister for Labour Mr. P. A. Sangma on Sunday made it clear that the Government was opposed to any attempt to link labour issues with international trading.

The Centre had taken a stand that any such attempt would be opposed at all the fora and the Government, opposition parties and the trade unions were united, Mr. Sangma said while participating in a discussion on 'Economic reforms and industrial relations' organised by the Southern India Mills Association (SIMA) here.

The Union Minister dismissed the suggestion that industrial relation issues formed the priority concern of the foreign investors coming to India. He said it was wrong to think that foreign investors were keen on setting up ventures in India because of 'cheap labour'.

The Government and the Prime Minister were keen that the impression be removed and the investors made to realise that the country possessed 'skilled' and not 'cheap' labour.

Claiming the industrial relation scene in the post-economic liberalisation phase as stable Mr. Sangma said, "three years ago, when the liberalisation process was set in motion, I used to meet the representatives of at least 15 trade unions on any given day.

But today, I have series of meetings with trade delegations coming from different parts of the world. How is that without an exit policy or industrial relations amendments we could infuse confidence among the foreign delegations, he asked. The foreign trade delegations, who were taken round the country by various industrial associations like Assocham and CII [Confederation of Indian Industries] were convinced that industrial relations could not prove a bottleneck for investments in India, the Union Minister said.

Mr. Sangma did not agree that merely amending the labour laws or changing the Industrial Relations Act would result in any improvements in labour relations. What was needed was a change in attitudes of employer and employees.

At the same time, the Government was keen on amending the industrial Relations Act to provide for a minimum 10 per cent labour enrolment for any trade union in a unit to secure recognition and participation in bipartite negotiations with managements. Similarly, a 51 per cent labour back-up should be made a must for a union to be treated as a bargaining agent. All this was aimed at ushering in the concept of 'one industry, one union'.

Mr. Gopalan, Secretary, Department of Labour at the Centre, said developing skills of workers to provide life-long employment opportunities should form the basis of the industrial relations and India could not afford to repeat the mistake committed by the western countries who neglected human resource and replaced it with machines.

Mr. A. R. Gurusamy, SIMA Chairman, Mr. S. Devaraj, the past chairman of SIMA and Mr. C. K. Kuppusamy, the Congress-I MP, were among those who participated in the discussions.

'Substantial Growth' in Exports Reported

BK1403070095 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 6 Mar 95 p 11

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's traditional areas of strength have once again provided the basis for a substantial growth in exports during the current financial year, while the composition of imports seems to confirm a recovery of domestic industrial production.

Commodity-wise data on the country's exports and imports for the first eight months of 1994-95 shows that the largest category of Indian exports—textiles—has grown at a pace which is well above the average and hence increased its share in total exports to almost a quarter.

The country exported textiles of various sorts worth $ 3,811 million in April-November 1994 against $ 3,16 million in the previous year, achieving a 26.4 per cent growth in a period in which the overall growth rate was just 15.3 per cent. The growth was particularly sharp (41.6 per cent) in the "cotton, yarn, fabrics, made-ups etc" category.

The second biggest export item—gems and jewellery—recorded a relatively modest growth of 10.5 per cent from $ 2,544 million to $ 2,811 million, but this was accompanied by a significant drop in imports of pearls, precious and semi-precious stones from $1,722 million to $ 966 million. Thus this sector has more than doubled net earnings from $ 822 million in April-November 1993 to $1,845 million in the corresponding period of the current financial year.

The most impressive growth among major export items, however, has been registered in chemicals and related products, under which category each subsector has done well. The overall growth for the entire category was 30.7 per cent (from $1,497 million to $1,958 million).

The engineering goods sector which has been plagued by problems related to the withdrawal of the international price reimbursement scheme (IPRS), on the other hand, has put up a lacklustre performance with exports rising by just 8.3 per cent from $ 1,685 million to $ 1,826 million. As a result, this sector has slipped from being the third largest exporter to the fourth position, with chemicals and related products filling the vacancy created.

Among the relatively smaller export items, coffee and marine products stand out for the extremely high growth rates. In the case of coffee, for example, the exports have risen by a whopping 174.4 per cent from $ 88 million to $ 241 million. Given the fact that at the same time tea exports have actually gone down from $ 231 million to $ 203 million, coffee has become the country's major plantation export.

Marine product exports have increased by a sizable 44.5 per cent from $ 469 million to $ 678 million. Apart from tea, other agricultural products that have done badly are tobacco (down 52.3 per cent), oil meals (a 17.8 per cent decline and, for obvious reasons, sugar and molasses. On the import front, bulk imports continue to dominate, but this in large measure due to the imports of sugar and edible oil forced by domestic shortages in both cases.

Most other categories of bulk imports have grown by smaller extents than the average of 22.1 per cent for total imports. Imports of petroleum, crude am products, for example have declined by 1.5 per cent while fertilisers have registered a modes increase. Exceptions were non ferrous metals (62.6 per cent) metalliferrous ores and metal scrap (136.7 per cent) and iron and steel (61.5 per cent), pointers to an industrial recovery.

This is also borne out by a 32.9 per cent increase in imports of machinery, with most of the growth coming in non-electrical machinery (37.7 per cent and transport equipment (31.8 per cent). Similarly, project good imports have gone up by a higher than average 28.6 per cent.

In "other" imports, organic and inorganic chemicals (69.6 per cent), coal, coke and briquettes (54.6 per cent) and artificial resins (41.7 per cent) were among the major items to record sizable increases.

Iran

Doctor Announces Ahmad Khomeyni in Coma

LD1303134395 Tehran IRNA in English 1037 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA—The medical team in charge of the treatment of Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni announced Monday [13 March] that the main problem the hojjat ol-eslam is now suffering from is the damage his brain sustained due to heart and respiratory problems.

The 50-year old hojjat ol-eslam was hospitalized in Baqiyatollah Hospital Sunday morning.

Doctors believe that heart arrest and problem in respiratory system of the hojjat ol-eslam caused heavy damage to the brain as a result of which other parts of the body were damaged too.

The late imam's son went to coma since Sunday and according to one of the doctors the hojjat ol-eslam is now suffering from brain death. However, the doctor added, other parts of the body such as heart and lungs are still functioning. He said that the hojjat ol-eslam may remain in coma for a long period of time.

Head of the medical team, Dr. Hassan Arefi, elaborating on problems in Hojjat ol-Eslam Khomeyni's respiratory system, liver and blood early Monday morning, called on people to pray for his recovery.

Meanwhile, a member of Hojjat ol-Eslam Khomeyni's family rejected the possibility of sending the hojjat ol-eslam abroad.

Condition 'Improving'; Organs Offered

LD1303182095 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Specialist doctors continue efforts to save Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Haj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni's life. We draw your attention to the remarks made by the head of the medical team, Dr. Arefi, about his condition.

[Begin Arefi recording] Thanks to the very diligent and persevering efforts of the medical team and the many experts, his condition is improving, praise be to God. The electro-encephalograph taken this afternoon shows some changes which indicate reappearance of brain life. We hope that subsequent graphs taken from the brain will show more activities in the brain. The digestive tract movements are improving. If these improvements continue, it is hoped that the consultants will allow some liquid food to be taken through the mouth. We hope to feed him gradually first with liquid and then with solid stuff. [passage omitted]

The important point I wish to mention here is that we, in various departments of the hospital, including the intensive care unit staff, have received countless telephone calls from the public offering to donate their kidneys, liver, heart, and other organs. Some have written letters and some have come here to the hospital in person. We are very grateful to these people for their devotion. We wish to shake their hands and kiss their feet for so much kindness. May God reward them. [end recording]

Brain Shows 'Minor Functioning'

LD1403075095 Tehran IRNA in English 0717 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 14, IRNA—Head of the medical team in charge of the treatment of Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, son of the late Imam Khomeyni, Dr. Hassan Arefi said here Tuesday [14 March] that the Hojjat ol-Eslam's general health condition is relatively improving.

He told IRNA that the problem in the respiratory system has to some extent been removed and the blood pressure is gradually becoming normal.

However, Dr. Arefi added, the brain problem is still there. He noted that the latest tests have shown minor functioning of the brain.

Following the first problems, Hojjat ol-Eslam Khomeyni's heart and respiratory system were stopped for two hours, causing serious damages to different parts of the body including the kidneys, said the doctor.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khomeyni was hospitalized in Baqiyatollah Hospital, in northern Tehran, Sunday morning due to respiratory and heart problems.

Stressing that the health condition of the Hojjat ol-Eslam could gradually improve, Dr. Arefi called on people to pray for his recovery.

Meanwhile, reports from the city of Marv in the central Asian republic of Turkmenistan said that Muslims in the city together with the Iranian residents there gathered at the Iranian Consulate General Monday night and prayed for the immediate recovery of the son of the late imam.

Velayati Eager To Sign NPT If Israel Does

BR1003144795 Milan PANORAMA in Italian 17 Mar 95 pp 96-98

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by Maurizio Molinari in Tehran; date not given: "Ayatollah Calling Pope"—first three paragraphs are PANORAMA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran, Boris Yeltsin's Russia, and the pope can help build a new world order that will safeguard both peace and religious faith. This is the surprise statement made by 'Ali Akbar Velayati, who has been Tehran's foreign minister for 14 years. In this exclusive interview granted to PANORAMA, Velayati talks about Iran's recent change of course. Accused of terrorism and nuclear proliferation, ostracized by Washington and many European governments, wrestling with a serious economic crisis, and sidelined by the Middle East peace process, the country of the ayatollahs wants to emerge from its isolation by launching an ambitious project: to promote an international strategy as an alternative—no less—to that of the only remaining superpower, the United States.

Velayati is the architect of this new policy that will shake the West. It is a three-point plan: to reaffirm the centrality of Islam as a means of attracting Muslim support; to boost political dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church with a view to opening a breach in the European-American alliance, and to strike a deal with Mosocow to "pacify" central Asia. Tehran's undeclared purpose, many authoritative analysts claims, is "to gain leadership of the countries that do not identify with Western values and decisions."

This is the latest spectacular move made by Velayati, the foreign minister who negotiated with Saddam Husayn's Iraq the end of hostilities between the two countries, the man who kept Tehran clear of the Gulf War. Western-educated—he is very jealous of his title as a doctor of pediatric medicine—, a thoroughbred diplomat, as skilled in finding his way about the corridors in the UN headquarters as about those in the Iranian parliament, Velayati has earned himself the nickname of "Tehran's Gromyko," the Islamic equivalent of the famous former Soviet foreign minister. Rising 50, and seated in front of the portraits of the Islamic triumvirate (Ayatollah Khomeyni, his successor Khamene'i, and President Rafsanjani), on the eve of his departure for the Copenhagen UN summit he spoke to PANORAMA in his elegant Tehran residence: a complex of buildings and gardens that once belonged to the shah's family.

[Molinari] How would you assess your country's current relations with Europe?

[Velayati] The European countries have differing attitudes toward us. Iran aims to improve its relations with the West: Your know-how and technologies are necessary for our development.

[Molinari] And what point have relations with Italy reached?

[Velayati] There is no obstacle at our end, but there are delays due to political resistance at the Italian end...

[Molinari] Is it that Italy does not trust Iran?

[Velayati] No, but some people in Rome listen to the bad advice received from your allies. Anyway, our relations are sound and have become stronger in the course of time. We have to diversify at the economic level.

[Molinari] In what sectors?

[Velayati] In the industrial sector. Before the revolution, many Italian companies were operating in our country. We want to encourage them to come back.

[Molinari] But the signs are not good. Italy was your third- largest trading partner in 1993, but now we are in fifth place.

[Velayati] That is true, but it is because others are taking the plunge while you hesitate.

[Molinari] Who are Iran's friends in Rome?

[Velayati] One above all: Giulio Andreotti. He proved a good friend to Iran right from the difficult days. I am referring to 1981, when the revolution was closely followed first by international isolation and then by the war. I met him for the first time in Havana in 1982, when Andreotti was in the Interparliamentary Union. We became great friends, and we still are today.

[Molinari] However, Andreotti now faces a trial for criminal offences...

[Velayati] I know the charges that have been brought against him. It is difficult to judge from here. However, he is undoubtedly a capable politician, toward whom Iran has a debt of friendship.

[Molinari] Do you have plans for a trip to Italy?

[Velayati] No. It is your turn next, since I came to Rome last, in 1992. If your new foreign minister wants to come, the doors are open.

[Molinari] During his last tour in Asia, Pope John Paul II sent out a message urging cooperation with the continent's major religions. What do you think?

[Velayati] It was an important message, with which we concur. A true dialogue between Christianity and Islam would be a step forward for the whole of humanity. Great attention has been and is being paid to the pope's message: the Catholic Church can become a crucial partner in what is still a difficult dialogue with the West.

[Molinari] So why do you find yourselves on the opposite side from the Vatican in what is nothing short of a civil war in Sudan?

[Velayati] The war in Sudan is political, not religious, in nature. Cooperation between Islam and Christianity may well be the great feature of the coming millennium, because there are Christian minorities in Muslim countries and vice versa.

[Molinari] Will this cooperation be open to the third great monotheistic religion, Judaism, as well?

[Velayati] Respect for the faith is common to all religious people, who must join forces to defend themselves against the threat to their creed.

[Molinari] Are you referring, for example, to France, which does not want the Islamic veil worn in state schools?

[Velayati] Of course, but not only France. Our enemy is nonconfessional intolerance. The faith must be saved, and the faithful protected against interference by states that do not respect them. This is the ground on which we want to explore a major agreement with the Catholic world, as represented by the pope in Rome.

[Molinari] Muslims are arriving in Europe, and in Italy as well, in ever-increasing numbers. How should we receive them and what can we expect from them?

[Velayati] Muslims must keep their identity, and Europe must safeguard it. Banning the Islamic veil from schools is a violation of human rights.

[Molinari] But you do not allow those who do not want to wear it to do so.

[Velayati] True, but we are a religious country: It is France that describes itself as liberal, free, and nonconfessional. And those who declare themselves nonconfessional must safeguard the religions. Prohibiting the veil just means wanting to convert everyone to Christianity. France is not an example to be followed.

[Molinari] People in Tehran are saying that you will be the one to succeed President Rafsanjani. Is it true?

[Velayati] A lot of people are asking me. Of course, I am not volunteering for the job, but I am here, at work in my office.

[Molinari] What are your foreign policy priorities?

[Velayati] Regional cooperation, close relations with the Muslim countries, and dialogue with the Western countries that can help us in our development.

[Molinari] And the Islamic revolution?

[Velayati] It must be a goal for all Muslim countries, Bosnia included.

[Molinari] What about the United States?

[Velayati] No. We have no intention of resuming relations with Washington. (But trade is resuming: For the first time since 1980, Iran has signed an oil deal with Conoco—PANORAMA editor's note)

[Molinari] Yeltsin's Russia is playing a leading role in a major diplomatic effort to lift the sanctions against Iraq. Are you in favor?

[Velayati] We have great sympathy for the Iraqi people, who are oppressed by Saddam and have a strong Islamic vocation. Russia wants to ease the sufferings of the Iraqi people, and rightly so. Moscow also wants to resume its old ties with Baghdad, which is comprehensible.

[Molinari] Are you by any chance opening the Gulf to Moscow?

[Velayati] Russia is an established partner of ours on the central Asian stage, especially since the collapse of the Soviet empire.

[Molinari] Tehran has become the economic and political reference point for the Muslim republics of the former USSR. What is Iran's strategy?

[Velayati] Our relations with the Asian republics are parallel and complementary to our relations with Moscow. We are interested in stability and prosperity in these republics, which have a strong Muslim, indeed Shiite, identity. And all this cannot be achieved without Moscow. It is no coincidence that our meetings with the Russians are being stepped up.

[Molinari] Do you also discuss Chechnya, where Russian troops are firing on Muslims?

[Velayati] We mainly discuss Chechnya. It is an open wound that must be healed. We have confidence in Russian efforts and are ready to do what we can to foster an agreement.

[Molinari] What about the new Busheur nuclear power station that Moscow is helping Iran to build?

[Velayati] It is being built for civilian purposes. We are in favor of ratifying the nuclear nonproliferation treaty that will keep this region free of nuclear weapons. But this principle must apply to everyone, Israel included.

[Molinari] But Israel does not want to give up its nuclear umbrella because it feels threatened precisely by Iran. And it has invited you on several occasions to take part in the peace negotiations...

[Velayati] The agreements between the PLO and Israel signed in Washington are a dead letter. They have led nowhere, nor have they settled the matters of substance.

[Molinari] But do the Palestinians not have a land at last?

[Velayati] Where is the sense in withdrawing from a small portion of the occupied territories while at the same time continuing to set up Jewish settlements in Palestine?

[Molinari] Yasir 'Arafat believes in peace...

[Velayati] Arafat is alone and defeated. When the opposition takes to the streets in Gaza, it brings out 200,000 people. He can only scrape together 20,000. But that is not the point.

[Molinari] What is the pont?

[Velayati] The so-called peace agreements have not resolved the problems of 4 million Palestinian refugees still living in refugee camps in the Arab countries, much less have they brought an agreement on the Golan Heights or southern Lebanon.

[Molinari] Does Iran support the hizballah militants in the southern Lebanon and the fundamentalist Palestinians in the occupied territories?

[Velayati] We support the Palestinian cause. We always have. But we have not given and are not giving the Palestinians arms.

[Molinari] Iran has been under running fire over the last few weeks: first the accusations over the missiles lined up in the Gulf, then the case of the Israeli pilot reportedly held prisoner in Tehran. What is your reply?

[Velayati] It is quite simple: The United States has selected us as its enemy, accusing us of every possible evil, terrorism included. But it is just a matter of a big... of too big a fuss that the Americans need for their propaganda in the Middle East.

[Molinari] Let us get back to Italy. What was your reaction to Rome city hall's two decisions: first, not to grant honorary citizenship to Salman Rushdie and, second, to coopt onto the city council a representative of the non-EC immigrants, who will in all likelihood be a member of the same religion as yourself?

[Velayati] There is little to be said about Rushdie: All the Muslim countries have come out against him on no less than three occasions. Making him an honoroary citizen would have been a serious mistake. However, the other proposal strikes me as a strongly positive signal. And I am pleased that it comes from Rome, the city of the pope, which will do a lot to get Muslims to work together.

Christopher Talks With GCC on Iraq Sanctions Viewed

NC1303102595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 13 Mar 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] During his Middle East visit U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher met the foreign ministers of five Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] members in Riyadh and held talks with them.

In the joint communique issued afterward, these countries called for continuing UN economic sanctions against Iraq. The foreign ministers of GCC members Qatar and Oman did not participate in this session. These two countries, which have been behind the trend toward normalizing relations with Baghdad for the past two years, recently announced their stance in support of reducing the international embargo against Iraq.

Political analysts believe that since the oppressed people of Iraq are bearing the brunt of Iraq's economic sanctions, the United States and the Arab countries, which favor continuing the embargo against Baghdad, are facing increasing difficulties in justifying their stances. The GCC, which had a unified stance against Iraq in the oil war, for which its members provided funds in a joint effort, has lost its solidarity in this regard.

The opposition by Qatar and Oman to continuing sanctions against Iraq indicates a difference of opinion among the members of the Council. Qatar and Oman believe the continuing embargo against Iraq will pave the way for constant tension and polarization stemming from the oil war and deem it the biggest obstacle to the return of peace to the region.

Similarly, the United States, which supports continuing the embargo against Iraq for particular and recognized political reasons, has displayed a different attitude ahead of the Security Council session to discuss this issue. The recent visit to Kuwait by the U.S. representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, and the current visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State Christopher indicate that the United States' insistence on sanctions against Iraq at today's rotational session of the Security Council will require much more justification.

TEHRAN TIMES on Christopher's Middle East Visit

LD1203094895 Tehran IRNA in English 0411 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA—The U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, is in the region to drum up some support for the falling Arab-Israeli peace deal.

The English-language daily TEHRAN TIMES editorialized on the recent trip to Middle East of the U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, to save from falling apart the so-called "peace deal" between Arab and Israel regimes.

Misled to believe that his shuttle diplomacy will win results, Christopher has begun a tour of the Middle East since Wednesday [8 March] to save the peace from falling apart. The major aim of Christopher's trip is to lure Syria back to the negotiating table, the daily underlined.

The observers say that as long as the Syrian-Israeli peace talks are deadlocked over Israeli withdrawal from Golan Heights, the so-called "peace deal" will not be comprehensive. It does not seem likely that Israelis will budge from their intransigent position on Golan Heights. So the "peace deal" will go on ailing as it has done since its double-inceptions in Madrid and Oslo, the paper commented.

At the root of Christopher's problems is his traditionally American appeasement of Israel. As an American statesman, Christopher has had to watch his words whenever he has talked about the Zionist regime. As a democratic politician he has had to watch his every word whenever he has expressed any opinion on Israel. The Jewish voters in America, who usually vote for the democrats, would take their revenge in 1996 at the ballots for any insolence committed against the Zionist state, TEHRAN TIMES noted.

While in Cairo last Thursday, Christopher took the courage to voice his support for Egypt's call for elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East, but in the same breath he made what amounted to a timid retreat of his position by saying that the time is not right to make the same demand of Israel, the daily said.

After meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the U.S. secretary of state, said that adherence to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) should be "universal". In a move to keep Egyptians guessing about where the U.S. loyalty lies, he was also quick to add that the U.S. understands the Egyptians' concern, the paper stated.

But the whole world knows where the U.S loyalty lies: the U.S. is, as it always has been, loyal first and foremost to the Zionist regime. It is this very partisanship on the part of the U.S. that renders it the least qualified nation to broker peace between Arabs and Israelis, TEHRAN TIMES pointed out.

The U.S. has historically been a friend of Israel and a foe of Arabs, even the very Arabs it considers as allies. Throughout the "peace process," it has learned on the side of Israel. The "peace process" will not succeed as long as the U.S. prefers to appease Israel, as long as it is ready to sacrifice Arab interest at the altar of Zionism, the daily concluded.

Ministry Condemns Killing of Afghan Mazari

LD1403113295 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Hojjat ol-Eslam Abdol Ali Mazari, secretary general of Afghanistan's Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami, was martyred yesterday by the Taleban forces.

The Taleban forces had captured martyr Mazari and a number of his companions. When transferring them to Jalalabad, the Taleban forces martyred them in a helicopter.

The representative council of Afghanistan's Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami in Tehran sent a message to His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, guardian of the Muslims' Cause, to the Islamic ummah, and to the combative nation of Afghanistan, offering congratulations and condolences on this martyrdom. The council also declared a week of mourning in Afghanistan.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry also issued a statement condemning the martyrdom of the secretary general of Afghanistan's Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami. The Foreign Ministry called on all the jihad groups in Afghanistan to abandon the fighting as soon as possible and to resume peaceful talks in order to restore peace and tranquillity all over the country by respecting the rights of all sections of the Afghan people.

Opposition General Released; 'Ill' from Treatment

NC1303201195 Paris AFP in English 1832 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13 (AFP)—A former army general arrested last November for calling for political reform in Iran has been released from jail, an opposition party said Monday [13 March].

Azizollah Amir-Rahimi, 75, was freed Sunday but is "seriously ill because of the 130 days of illegal detention and inhuman treatment," the nationalist Iranian People's Party said in a statement to AFP.

The secular party, tolerated by the government, said that by releasing Amir-Rahimi Iranian leaders had backtracked on earlier statements that he would be tried by a revolutionary court.

There was no explanation for Amir-Rahimi's release, or confirmation from the Iranian authorities.

The general published an open letter to Iranian leaders on November 4 condemning summary executions ordered by the country's courts, and calling for political reforms and the formation of a government of national unity.

Amir-Rahimi's son, Mehrdad Ami-Rahimi, who was arrested shortly after his father was released last week.

The general, a nationalist, opposed Iran's pro-Western Shah and was arrested several times during his reign as well as being thrown out of the army.

He supported the 1979 Islamic revolution and was named military police chief by the new government. After being sidelined several months later he re-joined the nationalist secular opposition and criticised Iran's handling of the 1980-1988 war against Iraq.

Former General Granted 3-Day Leave From Jail

LD1303150495 Tehran IRNA in English 1351 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA—The Islamic revolution's court in Tehran announced today that the former general of the armed forces, Azizollah Amir-Rahimi, has been granted a three-day leave from prison starting on Sunday [12 March] .

The judge had accepted the request of his lawyer to be granted the leave and "he will be back in prison next Wednesday," the Public Relations Office of the court said.

It added that granting leave was a legal option for the prisoners according to the Islamic law and all detainees are entitled to enjoy a limited leave upon establishinbg justifiable proofs for their request.

Foreign news agencies reported today that Amir-Rahimi had been released for illness resulting from "inhuman treatment" by prison officers.

KUNA Previews Ministry Official's Visit to Kuwait

LD1203105695 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0820 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 12 Mar—Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian Foreign Ministry undersecretary for Arab affairs and North Africa, this afternoon begins a Gulf tour, which starts it with a three-day visit to Kuwait during which he will hold talks with senior Kuwaiti officials.

Official sources at the Iranian Foreign Ministry told the Kuwaiti news agency—KUNA—here today that Sheykholeslam is going to head a high-ranking delegation from the Foreign Ministry and the Islamic consultative Majles during the tour which also includes the state of Qatar.

The sources added that the visit is aimed at exchanging viewpoints and discussing bilateral issues and the latest developments in the Arabian Gulf area as well as generally discussing developments in the Middle East region.

The sources said that the visit of the high-ranking Iranian official is taking place within the framework of the desire of the two neighboring countries leaderships to develop and strengthen bilateral relations in all fields in the interest of their two Muslim peoples.

They said that the Iranian-Kuwaiti talks will also include preparations for the visits senior officials of the two countries plan to make and they include the forthcoming visit of the speaker of the Islamic consultative Majles 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri to Kuwait in April.

The sources added that Sheykholeslam will discuss with Kuwaiti officials ways of strengthening bilateral cooperation at international organizations like the United Nations, the non-aligned movement, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The sources have denied, in reply to a KUNA question about the existence of any relationship to the tour of Hoseyn Sheykholeslam to the area with the current visit of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Middle East area. They stressed that "our relationship with the State of Kuwait is strong and is not affected by other factors."

They explained that it is probable that Hoseyn Sheykholeslam will visit other countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council if the necessary arrangements are made in the coming days.

The delegation accompanying Hoseyn Sheykholeslam includes 'Ali Asghar Khaji, adviser to the foreign minister; Morteza Rahimi, head of the Arabian Gulf desk at the Iranian Foreign Ministry; and Seyyed Mohammadi, adviser at the office of the speaker of Islamic consultative Majles.

Czech Industry, Trade Minister Meets Officials

LD1303182895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting yesterday with Vladimir Dlouhy, the Czech industry and trade minister, First Vice President Habibi referred to the good and long-standing ties between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Czech Republic. He declared our country's readiness for further expansion of ties.

The first vice president outlined Iran's technical capabilities in various industrial fields, the construction of dams, power stations, and its significant progress in agriculture, and stressed the necessity for Czech-Iranian cooperation. He said: Considering Iran's fundamental policy on the expansion of cooperation and friendly ties with neighboring countries, the Middle East, the Muslim world, and developing countries, the Czech Republic could become one of Iran's partners. We would like both sides to strive for that.

At the meeting the Czech industry and trade minister said that after a transitional period and moves toward a market economy his country has placed on its agenda the expansion of technical cooperation with all countries, including Iran, and would like to have more participation in Iran's industrial programs.

Australia Seeks Transit Route to Central Asia

LD1203185295 Tehran IRNA in English 1759 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zahedan (Sistan-Baluchestan), March 12, IRNA—Australian Ambassador in Iran Nick Warner today proposed transit of Australian goods to Central Asian countries via this southeastern Iranian province which has a coastline on the Gulf of Oman.

In his meeting with Warner here Sunday [12 March] the governor general of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, 'Ali Bakhsh Jahanbakhsh, counted the transit facilities of the area and welcomed the ambassador's proposal.

The Australian ambassador is visiting Zahedan the provincial capital in order to review the transit possibilities for Australian goods to Central Asia via the province.

The chief port of Sistan-Baluchestan is Chahbahar which is linked by an all-weather road to Sarakhs on the Iran-Turkmenistan border.

Plans are underway to develop Chahbahar into a major free trade zone.

Majles Ratifies Budget for New Fiscal Year

LD1203210695 Tehran IRNA in English 2024 GMT 12 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 12, IRNA—The national budget of Iran for the next calendar year (starting March 21) will be Rls 96,101,181,474,000 was ratified by the Majles here Sunday [12 March].

In the report of the first reading that was done previously in February the revenue ceilings for the national budget for the year 1374 (March 1996-March 1996) and also the share of each sector had been determined with respect to the economic, social and cultural programmes of the Second National Development Plan.

In their second session Sunday, Majles deputies ratified a law bill which provides that two per cent of the development budget of each and every university be allocated for building mosques in universities not having such facilities or for improving mosques in other universities under the supervision of the bureau of personal representatives of the leader of the Islamic revolution, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

The Majles Sunday also approved the single urgency clause of a scheme for adopting heavier punishments against profiteers.

The scheme provides that except for goods and services the prices of which have been determined in the budget bill for the year 1374 the prices of all other goods an commodities should be brought down to their level as of October 23, 1994.

Minimum Wage To Be Raised 20%

LD1303215495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] On the approval of the Supreme Labor Council, from the beginning of next year workers' wages will be increased by an average of 20 percent.

The Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs announced on Monday [13 March]: From 1374 [beginning 21 March 1995] the minimum daily wage of laborers has been fixed at 5,333 rials. The total monthly wage received by laborers will be at least 159,990 rials.

Nepal

DPRK Diplomats Held Briefly for 'Currency Racket'

BK1303151195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1501 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, March 13 (AFP)—Nepalese customs officials arrested some North Korean diplomats in connection with a foreign currency racket but released them later, a customs official said Monday [13 March].

The incident occured on Friday when the North Korean diplomats were about to board the Thai International Airways aircraft on its regular flight to Bangkok from Kathmandu that day, the official said requesting anonymity. The aircraft took off two hours behind schedule and the undisclosed number of diplomats have been asked to remain on the embassy premises pending investigation.

The Revenue Investigation Department, police and the Airport Customs acknowledge the incident but refuse to disclose the value of currencies alleged to have been found on the North Koreans.

North Korean officials have not commented on the affair.

Pakistan

JANG Claims 2 Dead Americans CIA Members

LD1303205595 Tehran IRNA in English 1841 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 13, IRNA—A leading Pakistani daily disclosed on Monday [13 March] that the two American diplomats killed last week in Karachi were members of the notorious American espionage network the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The widely read Urdu-language daily 'JANG' said the attackers had previously indentified the two so-called diplomats as CIA members.

It did not give the identity of the attackers who reportedly fired from a taxi and fled after killing the two Americans and injuring a third who was riding in the same car bearing diplomatic number plates.

The U.S. Government sent a 36-member team to Islamabad on Friday for an investigation into the killings. 12 members of the team are known to be FBI agents. Washington has announced a dlrs 2 million prize for the person or persons who provide information about the attackers and has promised them visas for residing in the United States.

Karachi Police Conduct Raids, Arrest Over 300

BK1303160295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah said the government has taken concrete steps to protect the life and property of the people. In a statement in the Sindh Assembly today, he said everybody's life is important, whether they are a U.S. national or a Pakistani. He said the people of Karachi have now become aware of the conspiracy that certain elements have been carrying out to create conflict between brothers on a sectarian and linguistic basis. The people have foiled this conspiracy, he added.

The Karachi police have arrested more than 300 persons in raids conducted in various parts of the city during last 48 hours. The arrested persons include six criminals involved in serious crimes. They include Fahim Ahmad alias Commando, Basit Khan and Anas of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement-Haqiqi, Shoaib of Muhajir Qaumi

Movement-Altaf group, and Zakir Hussain and Abdul Khaliq of the Tehrik-i- Nifaz-i-Fiqa-i-Jafria. The criminals were enjoying the patronage of a narcotics smuggler. The Sindh interior secretary told reporters that at the instruction of the prime minister, the police have started a campaign to arrest terrorists and criminals. He said during the raids in the city, four Kalashnikov rifles, two submachine guns, nine revolvers, four rifles, three shotguns, 11 pistols, and 300 cartridges were recovered.

According to reports, two people were killed in incidents of sniper shooting in Karachi today.

Crackdown Ordered on Illegal Immigrants

BK1003162195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 10 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Interior Ministry has directed the concerned officials to make a comprehensive survey of illegal immigrants to control terrorist activities in the country effectively. Official sources told the ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN in Lahore today that the government is determined to deal with terrorists strictly. The sources said that steps are being taken to expel all illegal immigrants from the country under a phased program. These sources added that deputy commissioners and law enforcement agencies have been directed to submit a report on the increase in tents near railway stations because these tents have become terrorist targets. These sources appealed to the people to cooperate with the government in its antiterrorist efforts and keep a strict watch on strangers in their localities.

Bhutto Wants F-16s, End to Pressler Amendment

BK1403043295 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 14 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the United States should reevaluate the its policy in respect of Pakistan and end the Pressler law. In an interview with a prominent Singapore newspaper, THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, Benazir Bhutto criticized the application of the discriminatory Pressler law, which had resulted in the cutting off all military and economic assistance to Pakistan. She pointed out that the application of the Pressler Amendment to Pakistan was not fair as the country does not possess a nuclear device. Pakistan had deliberately chosen not to develop a nuclear capacity, despite having developed the technology, and this policy was in line with the objectives of regional and global nonproliferation. She said that even though the United States now admits that Pakistan has not put together a nuclear device, it still continues to penalize Pakistan unfairly under the Pressler Amendment.

Answering a question on her forthcoming visit to Washington, she said the main desire of Pakistan is that the Pressler law should go. She also referred to the nondelivery of F-16 jet fighters even when Pakistan had paid $1.2 billion for these aircraft.

Benazir Bhutto expressed outrage at the killing last week of two American consulate employees and the wounding of another in Karachi. She said Pakistan today is one of the frontline states against the forces of extremism. Pakistan has a constitutional and democratic government and it should be strengthened and supported.

The prime minister also referred to the negative effects of the long dictatorial regime of General Ziaul Haq and said that during his regime different groups were patronized to keep people in fear. The dictatorship used Islam to try to hide its shortcomings and give itself legitimacy.

Editorial Condemns U.S Leaders' Stance

BK1403080095 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 14 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "America is at it again"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] If appearances were a reflection of the reality in international affairs, Pakistan would have a good reason to be elated today. Robin Raphel, Hazel O'Leary, and William Perry have all been saying for a while now that the Pressler law is counterproductive in America's relationship with Pakistan. It should therefore be repealed in Pakistan's case. The State Department is said to be in the process of considering such a recommendation to be presented to the Congress. To all appearances, we may now be witnessing the final episodes of Pakistan's serialised bad dreams about F-16s, 1.2 billion dollars, etc. But in international politics, as in life, appearances are seldom an accurance reflection of the reality.

The Americans have made no bones about why the Pressler law should now be withdrawn. Ms Raphel, in explaining her reasons for supporting the withdrawal, used some typically inflated and inaccurate official prose, though she departed from the usual convolutions: "Periodically there is some concern that if Pakistan doesn't sort out its relationship with India and feels more and more isolated it could develop what we could consider an unhealthy relationship with Iran." An unhealthy relationship with Iran—this is the clincher. She means that if Pakistan develops a mutually beneficial alliance with Iran, supplying it nuclear technology in return perhaps for cash to fuel its own programme, the relationship would be unhealthy from the American point-of-view. Semantically, an unhealthy relationship is one in which the related parties follow practices that are mutually harmful. An unhealthy relationship is not one in which their practices go against the interests of a third party. This would be true of an unhealthy relationship from any point-of-view—whether that of the parties involved or of an observer (in this case, the US). But let us for a moment forgive Ms Raphel's poor semantics. Let us assume that the word unhealthy can be employed in the frivolous manner in which she uses it. What exactly is an unhealthy relationship in American terms? It is one in which two or more countries can continue to grow and prosper in the absence of American intervention. As such, Japan's relationship with the rest of East Asia is unhealthy (hence America's mad-dash for APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation], Germany's ties with Russia are unhealthy (hence the reviewed zest for NATO), and of course Pakistan's relationship with China is down- right cancerous.

America has been very successful in stemming Pakistan's long-standing and immensely healthy relationship with China. By making an issue out of M-11 missiles, by monitoring everything that passes between the two countries, by erecting the seismic station in Chakwal, and by countless other surreptitious means the US has successfully made China smell a fish in Pakistan. If China stops all exchanges with us—trade, technology, expertise, etc—the relationship between Pakistan and China, in American terms, will have become perfectly 'healthy'. So too for Iran. Ms Raphel's poor semantics must be interpreted in this context.

Editorial Views F-16 Situation

BK1103143495 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "A Poor Bargain"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphel, very candidly revealed some aspects of the Pakistan-US relationship during a Senate subcommittee hearing. Amongst her responses to close questioning by the committee members, Ms Raphel confirmed what had only been a suspicion or subject to speculation in Pakistan so far. According to Ms Raphel, the US government tried last year to persuade Pakistan to allow international verification of its nuclear enrichment facility in return for the release of 38 F-16s which Pakistan had already paid for. The Pakistan government refused on the grounds that what the Americans were asking for would be too intrusive and blow the cover off Pakistan's policy of nuclear ambiguity. It may be recalled that the delivery of the F-16 fighters has been held up for some years under the Pressler Amendment, which requires the US President to certify every year that Pakistan does not possess, nor is developing, a nuclear weapon. The unwillingness of US Presidents since 1990 to so certify has led to the cut-off of all American aid, military and economic, to Pakistan. This discriminatory and country-specific legislation has been the cause of strain in Pak-US relations, Ms Raphel admitted. She also expressed her administration's perception that the Pressler Amendment had failed to make Pakistan abandon its nuclear programme or permit its verification. The US administration, Ms Raphel emphasised, wanted to attend to the problems accompanying the continuation of the Amendment by working with Congress to sort out the matter.

What Ms Raphel has honestly admitted is that the US administration is in a bind because it cannot deliver the F-16s, nor does it have the funds to repay Pakistan's money. Ms Raphel thought it might be possible to sell the aircraft to some other country but admitted it was difficult to find a buyer. Senator Hank Brown, chairman of the Senate sub-committee, suggested in a lighter moment that perhaps the Smithsonian Museum might be willing to buy them. Levity aside, the frank exchange at the hearing served to highlight the inherently flawed nature of the Pressler Amendment. It has failed to meet its original objective of promoting nuclear non- proliferation since it ignored the very real threat Pakistan perceives from a nuclear-armed India. Its one-sided nature, when India suffers no adverse consequences of openly pursuing an ambitious nuclear weapons and delivery system programme, is transparently obvious. The Amendment therefore fails to command even the respect of the American government. Pakistan did well to firmly reject the quid pro quo being asked for by the US 38 F-16s in return for nuclear insecurity would have been a poor bargain under any circumstances. It now remains to be seen what effect if any the Senate subcommittee hearing can have on opinion within Congress to undo the injustice to Pakistan by repealing a bad law which has brought nothing but ignominy to the US for a morally ambiguous, skewed, defective piece of legislation which should never have seen the light of day in the first place.

Government 'Contemplating' Purchase of 500 Tanks

BK0703113095 Islamabad THE NATION in English 7 Mar 95 pp 1, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 6—Pakistan is contemplating to import 500 main battle tanks (MBT's) to enable its army to match the threat perception emerging from India, says well informed defence sources.

But before the government takes the decision which tank it should import the army has decided to re-evaluate six MBT's which include M-84 (Yugoslavia) T-72 MI (Poland), T-72 MI (Czech) T-85 (China), T-80 (Ukraine) and T-72-S of Russian make.

It may be pointed out here that the Federal Government has recently provided enhanced budgetary allocations to the army to procure the needed tanks.

At present Pakistan Army has a few Chinese Type-8511s, 450 M-47/48s, 51 T-55s, 250 Type 69s, some 1200 Type-59s and 100 T-60/63 light. Pakistan had for some time being desperately looking for a suitable MBT to match the threat perception emerging from India.

Top on the line for import consideration is the Russian Tank T-72-S so far found to be the best available choice by the armoured experts of the Pakistan Army who hope to adopt its technology to develop the country's first MBT Al-Khalid. T-72-S is equipped with 125mm smooth bore gun, up-graded engine with better fire control system, improved manoeuvrability with reactive armour, penetration upto standard NATO specification.

Simultaneously Pakistan Army has also decided to acquire 12 Russian MI-17 cargo helicopters to cope with the troops transportation problems.

According to defence sources decisions to this effect were taken during Prime Minister's [PM] recent visit to the General Headquarters [GHQ] during which she was given a detailed briefing over the operational and technical impediments the Pakistan Army was confronted with due to lack of certain equipments. The Prime Minister was informed that while the Pakistan Army was in a state of top preparedness as far as the strategic planning and morale of the force was concerned it was in dire need of a front line tank and troops transportation system.

The PM was further informed about the technical problems being faced in executions of Tank Al-Khalid project. This has necessitated the acquisition of a most suitable MBT with transfer of technology facility so as to develop an indigenous tank.

The Prime Minister was also apprised about the pricing pattern of various tanks available in the market. While the Russian T-72-S was available at a hard cash price of 1.1 million US dollar per copy the other East European tanks are still cheaper. The western tanks are available at 4 to 5 million US dollars per copy.

Two pre-requisites have been set for the procurement which are (a) tests and trials of these tanks during summers in different parts of the country, (b) complete transfer of technology by the manufacturer.

It has been learnt that Russia is slightly reluctant to offer transfer of technology while other East European sources are ready to transfer technology along with credit facilities. It may be mentioned here that Russia has already supplied T-72 to India along with transfer of technology facility.

Meanwhile Pakistan Army has decided to adapt Chinese T-85 tanks recently received from China as an interim MBT. Pakistan has acquired some 100 T-85 an upgraded version of T-59 in late 1993. T-85 are equipped with 125mm gun with bigger engine. The performance of the tank was found extremely satisfactory.

In view of India's "Vijayanta" tank going into production line followed by MBT T-72 also going into production line with the help of the Russian, Pakistan felt the need to induct an up-graded tank to meet its threat perceptions. Its first priority was to launch a programme for the upgradation of T-59 with better fire control system, up-graded gun and an improved engine transmission.

A number of US firms and tank manufacturers from UK, Italy, Germany and France participated in biding. The upgradation programmes offered by them were found very satisfactory but the cost for the upgradation was more than the price of a new tank. Consequently the programme was scrapped in 1987 and it was decided to go for new induction of MBT along with transfer of technology. Meanwhile a joint venture was launched at an initial capital of 1 billion US dollars for the indigenised MBT 2000 as the future tank of Pakistan Army.

The bulk of the development work was done in China by Norinco and a prototype was produced in 1990 and brought to Pakistan for trials under the nomenclature of Al-Khalid. It, however, transpired during test and trials that Al-Khalid design suffered from a number of technical defects which had to be rectified causing indefinite delay to its induction into the army. Pakistan started evaluating a number of tanks including US, Brazilian, French, German and Russian tanks. Due to phenomenal cost of the Western machines Pakistan decided to go for East European variants of Russian T-72. Since Pakistan was already familiar with T-59 design it approached several East European countries who offered the tank with the transfer of technology facility.

Countries offering this technology were Poland, Czech, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Ukraine. Yugoslavia offered their tank M-84, which is the same thing as T-72, with enlarged turret. This tank was subsequently brought to Pakistan for trials in 1990. The tanks were very suitable but unfortunately due to political problems and civil war in Yugoslavia the factory was closed down and the deal could not be materialised. Then an offer came from Poland and the then Czechoslovakia. Both the tanks were favourably looked into for their capabilities. The problem faced at this point was that no one country had a complete capability to supply a tank with full back up support system.

At this point lobbyists for different tanks started approaching the GHQ for buying their equipment. Three high powered teams of Pakistan army, POF [Pakistan Ordinance Factory], and HRF [Heavy Rebuild Factory] visited East Europe to carry out the evaluations of these tanks. Lt Gen Jehanghir Karamat (present CGS [chief of General Staff]), being a senior armoured man, was appointed the chairman of the evaluation committee. He personally visited all the countries and had physical trials of the tanks including the firing trials. The team discussed all the technical aspects of these tanks with the manufacturers and also visited the ammunition factories in Czech and Poland.

On its return the committee recommended that tanks be brought to Pakistan for tests and trials during the peak season of summer. But in the meantime a decision was taken at highest level to procure the Polish tank and subsequently it was brought to Pakistan for trials. The trials were not as good as were claimed by the manufacturer. As a result the Czech tank was also brought for tests and it was found that its firing penetration was not up to the NATO specification.

The then COAS [chief of Army Staff] signed the MOU [memorandum of understanding] in Poland but due to his untimely death the procurement was put into cold storage. Recently a team of Pakistan Army visited Russia to evaluate Russian T-72-S and found it very suitable but due to diplomatic difficulties the matter remains unsettled. It is believed that Pakistan Army has asked all its previous arms suppliers to make necessary rectifications in their tanks to bring them to Pakistan for re-evaluation.

President Leghari Speaks on Copenhagen Conference

BK1303084895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 13 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan, which is a victim of terrorism is in the forefront in the fight against terrorism and is doing its best to help combat this phenomenon. He was speaking at a news conference in Copenhagen, where he addressed the UN conference on social development. The president said Pakistan is seeking implementation of the UN resolutions on Kashmir, where the uprising is indigenous and Pakistan is only giving moral, diplomatic, and political support to the struggle of the Kashmiri people. He rebutted the assertion that any military or material support could be provided across the Line of Control, which he said was the most heavily policed in the world and where some 600,000 strong concentration of Indian troops existed.

About the unrest in Karachi, he said the government was aware of the gravity of the situation, which was of multidimensional nature. He said a battle is needed to wipe out terrorists.

About Pakistan's role at the UN summit conference on social development, he said the seven-point agenda proposed by him in his speech stands incorporated in the documents finalized by the preparatory committee in one form or the other. He said Pakistan took principled stand on key issues and called for accelerated and enhanced social action program in the developing countries assisted by the developed ones. The president emphasized that global concern should be reflected in practical terms on poverty alleviation and social integration. He said it was imperative to reduce conflicts, which adversely affect resource allocation for social development.

President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari returned to Islamabad this morning after attending the UN summit conference on social development in Copenhagen.

Paper Assails Zhirinovskiy for Annexation Remarks

BK1103125995 Lahore JANG in Urdu 10 Mar 95 p 3

[Editorial:"The Russian Leader's Desire or Scheme?]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to a broadcast of the Voice of Germany, the Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, while addressing a news conference in New Delhi, has said that Pakistan and Bangladesh should be annexed by India and that Russia and India should have a common border. Irrespective of the extent to which objective political realities will fit the desires of the Russian leader, the question arises as to why he felt the need to express this absurdity. Since India, after conspiring with Russia on an earlier occasion, had separated a part of Pakistan, it is innate and natural for the people of Pakistan to be worried over this sort of statement from a Russian leader. A few weeks ago, Pakistan's extremely trustworthy and closest friend as well neighbor, China, also tacitly expressed apprehensions that the disintegration of certain states of South Asia may hasten and that certain new states may come into being. Against the backdrop of India's abetment of terrorist and subversive activities in Karachi in particular, and in other parts of the beloved motherland in general, and after its failure to crush the freedom movement in occupied Kashmir, the hatching of new plots by India cannot be described as mere absurdity and speculation. Therefore, after obtaining the details of the Russian leader's aforesaid news conference through diplomatic and communication channels, the Pakistan Government should get the full details of this conspiracy. Despite its ultramodern scientific technology and troops, the astonishing fact is that Russia could not prevent the disintegration of its own union and has not yet regained from the shock. However, it has again started thinking on the lines of using its colonial tactics.

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